

THE  
JOHANNEAN PROBLEM  
GEORGE W. GILMORE, A.M.

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# THE JOHANNEAN PROBLEM

A RESUMÉ FOR ENGLISH  
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PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH BIBLICAL EXEGESIS AND CRITICISM  
IN BANGOR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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PHILADELPHIA  
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION  
AND SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK

1895

**C O P Y R I G H T , 1895, B Y**  
**THE TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN BOARD**  
**OF PUBLICATION AND SABBATH-**  
**SCHOOL WORK.**

TO THE  
REV. J. D. WELLS, D.D.,  
PASTOR OF THE  
SOUTH THIRD STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
BROOKLYN, N. Y.,  
WISE COUNSELOR, FAITHFUL PASTOR, DEVOTED FRIEND,  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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	<i>Page.</i>
Chap. I. Introduction .....	9
Chap. II. Adverse Criticism .....	14
Chap. III. The Antiquity of the Fourth Gospel. External Testimony, 180-200 A.D.....	18
Chap. IV. Antiquity (continued). External Testimony, mostly prior to 180 A.D.....	26
Chap. V. Antiquity (continued). Justin Martyr.....	36
Chap. VI. Antiquity (continued). Heretical Sects.....	45
Chap. VII. Antiquity (continued). The Alogi and the Ap- pendix to the Gospel.....	57
Chap. VIII. The Author. External Evidence.....	62
Chap. IX. Antiquity. Internal Evidence.....	69
Chap. X. The Author. Internal Evidence.....	73
Chap. XI. Objections Answered.....	98
Bibliography.....	108
Index.....	117



## PREFACE.

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This little book is not an Introduction to the Fourth Gospel. It deals exclusively with the antiquity and authorship of that book, and from an affirmative standpoint. Even this it does not profess to treat exhaustively. Such a course was impossible if the author's aim was followed. What that aim was will appear a little later.

The book grew out of the author's investigations made with the object of satisfying himself what conclusion the evidence for and against the Johannine authorship of the last gospel warranted and demanded. As soon as study of the subject began, the author was almost appalled at the volume of literature treating the "Johannean Problem." In English, French, and especially German, the treatises ran into scores, while articles almost innumerable, bearing on particular phases of the question, were found in the pages of the various journals and reviews.

The writer read nearly everything of importance that could assist him in reaching a conclusion concerning the evidence. He gave prolonged study to the Gospel itself. And as he read and studied, as he noted the abandonment of position after position held by adverse critics, the conclusion grew that no hypothesis which excluded the apostle John from the authorship satisfied the conditions and accorded with the testimony.

But to reach this conclusion intelligently, to get the

testimony before him, the writer had gone through a mass of material. He had taken voluminous notes, had arranged the evidence, culled from many authors, gathered from numerous sources. When his mind was made up, it occurred to him that a presentation of the *weightiest* evidence, the *most decisive* indications, might be of service to many who have not time to wade through the flood of literature on the subject; and that this might be done in a little book which could be bought by many who could not afford, say, the single volume even of Watkins' *Bampton Lectures*.

In acknowledgment of indebtedness the author is at loss where to begin, where to end. He read and re-read so frequently, that perhaps what was really another's seemed his own. Wherever he has consciously taken from an author, he has attempted to give credit in the body of the book. The writings of Godet, Luthardt, Schürer, Westcott, Sanday, Lightfoot, Ezra Abbot, E. A. Abbott, James Drummond, Matthew Arnold, Renan, Strauss, De Wette, Weizsäcker, Salmon, Weiss, Beyschlag, Harnack, Zahn and others, have been made tributary. The chapter on Justin Martyr is, of course, drawn from Dr. Ezra Abbot's masterly examination of that father. Next to Dr. Abbot, Dr. Sanday and Bishop Lightfoot have been most helpful. To all who have helped the author, he is most grateful.

Special thanks are tendered the Rev. E. R. Craven, D.D., and the Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D., of the Presbyterian Board of Publication.

BANGOR, ME., September, 1895.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

**New Testament Critical Problems.** If we except the Pentateuch, no books of the Bible have been more the object of study and the subject of controversy than the four gospels. This discussion of the gospels has resolved itself into two lines of investigation, with mutual relations, and yet really distinct each from the other. The first is the so-called **The Synoptic Problem.** “Synoptic Problem” concerning itself with the first three gospels, debating their common relationship and their origin. Curiously enough, the fight over the synoptic problem has not centred in the authorship of these books, and comparatively little has been said concerning their antiquity, although some skirmishes have been fought on that issue also. The second critical inquiry concerning the gospels, which is at present the central object of attack and defense, is the **The Johannean Problem.** “Johannean Problem.” There is a “Johannean Problem” in a wider sense than the one usually signified by that phrase, which includes the common relationship of the Apocalypse, the three epistles of John, and the fourth gospel. But the Johannean problem proper has to do with the antiquity and authorship of the

fourth gospel only. It is the Johannean problem in this limited sense with which we are concerned. We shall find, as we proceed, that there are certain subsidiary questions which have to be considered and answered, but the central question is as to the authorship of the gospel commonly called "According to St. John."

The State  
of the Case. From the time of the composition of the gospel until the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the all but universal declaration of the Church credited the composition of this gospel to John, the brother of James, most likely the youngest of the Lord's disciples. The solitary exception to this ascription comes

The Alogi. from a party in the early Church which existed probably in the time of Irenæus (*c. 130-202 A.D.*). We have a reference to almost certainly the same party in a writing of Epiphanius (*c. 320-403 A.D.*), in which he calls them "Alogi" [from "a" and "Logos"], meaning that they rejected the "Logos" doctrine of the fourth gospel. Because that party found this gospel opposed to their own theories, they denied its apostolicity. This is the sole exception to the otherwise universal testimony to the Johannean authorship of our gospel. Lest this exception should at the outset, because of its antiquity, cause a prejudice against the gospel, three things should be said: (1) while we have called those who maintained that opinion "a party," we have really in so doing misrepresented them, as the probability is that those who so held were simply scattering individuals in various churches, the number of whom never reached the dignity of a sect or a party; (2) these persons had a

motive for holding such opinions in their desire to discredit a book which, if received as apostolic, would leave them no ground for their own heretical notions; (3) parallels to their course can be found in the present times, *e. g.*, a commentator on the epistle to the Romans, who was for many years professor in theological seminaries and the author of a system of dogmatic theology, has "*for dogmatic reasons,*" deliberately rejected the reading of the best manuscripts in favor of a text not so well substantiated.

**Preliminary  
Observations.**

It is our purpose to summarize the evidence for the genuineness of the fourth gospel so far as ascertained at the present time. We must understand, however, that as all the gospels are anonymous, and as we owe to tradition

**Mathematical  
Proof not  
Obtainable.**

all that we know of their authorship, mathematical proof is not to be obtained, and that the best we can do is to show that the testimony points, with a very high degree of probability, to John the apostle as the author. It will be shown that the date of its composition can be pushed so far back that it is unlikely, if not impossible, that the gospel could have been written by any other than the beloved disciple.

A principle to be applied in investigations of the sort we are making is that a well-supported tradition in favor of a certain book's authenticity and genuineness stands un-

**Favorable  
Presumption.**

til it is disproved. To suggest doubts which rest upon conjecture is not sufficient to invalidate that tradition; proven facts not consonant with it alone can make it a just

object of suspicion. "The presumption is in favor of that which exists."

Another principle we are to remember is that negative evidence is always to be received with caution. It is not

**Negative Evidence**      enough to allege against the existence  
**Inconclusive.**      of a certain book at a given time that

an author or a number of authors did not quote it, unless it be proved that he or they (1) were in the habit of quoting other books of like tenor, and (2) needed to cite the book under discussion in order to treat the subject he was or they were dealing with. In like manner scantiness of evidence in a certain period must be put alongside of the scantiness of the literary remains which have come down to us. Many of the most voluminous Christian and heretical writings, which were written between 100 and 180 A.D., have been lost. We have, however, to note that what literature we have is in particularly close relationship with the Apostle John. Besides this, the negative argument is a most precarious one, as Dr. Sanday has clearly shown that Justin Martyr uses at most one Pauline epistle at the time when Marcion concedes ten. On the other hand, we must point out that citations used to prove quotations from the fourth gospel must be such as cannot be referred to the other three.

**Disagreement**      Yet one remark remains to be made.  
**of Opponents.**      Were the opponents of the genuineness of our gospel agreed in their conclusions, if there were even a substantial concord in their results, the case would be a most difficult one to defend. But we find that some deny both the genuineness and the historicity of the gospel; others defend the

genuineness but deny the historicity and *vice versa*; still others hold the discourses to be genuine but the narrative fabricated, and some are found who defend the narrative while affirming that the discourses are imaginary and invented. A like disagreement of the critics is shown in their theories of the partition of the gospel, some holding that the discourses are Johannine, and the narrative by a later hand; others declaring that parts of the discourses are by John, though by no means agreeing among themselves in the location of the joinings.

The conclusion evidently to be reached from this lack of a consensus among the opponents is that the marks on which critics rely as a basis for their theories are either imaginary, or so faint that they cannot be detected even after being pointed out. May we not also infer that any theory which excludes the apostle John from the authorship of the gospel is so beset with difficulties that the hypothesis of his authorship alone satisfies the conditions and gives rest?

## CHAPTER II.

### ADVERSE CRITICISM.

We have said that until the end of the eighteenth century there was only one protest to the *Modern Criticism*. otherwise universal ascription of the fourth gospel to John. The modern period of criticism upon that gospel dates from the end of the last century among the Deists of England and the representatives of the Illumination in Germany. But from this attack no disquiet, no effect worth noting, resulted.

In 1830, Bretschneider published, in Germany, a book on the *Probabilities Concerning the Genius and Origin of the Gospel and Epistles of John*, which attracted considerable attention. At that time Schleiermacher was at the height of his fame, and as he threw the whole weight of his influence against the critical hypothesis, a cohort of lesser lights meeting Bretschneider with a deluge of opposition, Bretschneider himself was staggered, and "subsequently withdrew his opinion." The attack was renewed twenty-four years later, when the founder

Baur. of the so-called "Tübingen School," Ferdinand Christian Baur, in a German publication, and, in 1847, in his *Critical Investigations Concerning the Canonical Gospels*, published his conclusions concerning the

object of the writing, from which the inference was immediate, that our gospel could not have been written by an apostle. Indeed he affirmed that it "could not have arisen earlier than the second half of the first century." According to him all deviations from the synoptic narrative were the product of the imagination, subordinated to the polemic plan of the writer. The apostolicity and historicity was from that time up to 1867 defended with more or less thoroughness by a host of writers, many of them, however, making substantial concessions to the critical or adverse school concerning the subjectivity or ideal character of the discourses. The next work of note, marking a retreat in the date claimed for the composition, yet still denying the Johannean authorship, was by Keim, *The History of Jesus of Nazareth*, 1867-72.

In England the only opponents of ~~Keim~~ prominence, who assail the genuineness of the gospel, are Tayler, the author of *Supernatural Religion*, and Samuel Davidson, in his *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*.

**Basis of Adverse Criticism.** The earlier method of assault was an endeavor to prove that the fourth gospel was what the Germans call a "tendency writing," that it was composed to combat certain unhappy trends of doctrine and incipient heresies existing in the form which the gospel combats not until the second century, and that therefore the date of the gospel has to be put so far into the second century that its composition by an apostle is an impossibility. There are thus two lines of attack; first, the authenticity or historicity; second, and as a result of the first,

the genuineness or authorship. The later basis of adverse criticism is found, first, in a comparison of the fourth gospel with the other three. The synoptic gospels are so named because they present the same view of the person and character of Christ, represent him as moving chiefly in Galilee, accord quite closely in the discourses attributed to him, and hence present, *on the whole*, a concordant and harmonious picture of himself and his ministry. Now, it is claimed, that the fourth gospel differs from the first three in several important respects. 1. The *scene* of our Lord's activity is different; in the synoptics he moves principally in Galilee; in John the scene of his activity is Judea. 2. The *time-marks* are different: the synoptics imply a ministry lasting only one year; John notes at least three passovers, hence a ministry of nearly three years. 3. The *events*, miracles, etc., are different. 4. The *discourses* of Christ, as given by the synoptists and John, are entirely dissimilar, varying in (a) substance and (b) style. Really included in the above summary of differences, but so important as to demand special attention, are four items of special interest. (1) There is a discrepancy between the first three gospels and the fourth regarding the *day* of our Lord's death. (2) Another difference is found in the *hours* of that day. (3) The Johannean narrative lacks a *progression* of historical narrative particularly as to the affirmation of the Messiahship of Jesus. (4) Along with this last "goes a general heightening of his claims."

It will be noticed that these assaults proceed from an examination of the gospel itself. There is still another basis of attack which is found in an affirmed lack of early

testimony from writers of the second century. We have here, then, two general lines of assault, internal and external; the testimony of the gospel to itself is impugned, and the testimony of others is said to be deficient. These two lines are met by the defenders of the

**Lines of Defense.** gospel in exactly the same way. The evidence for the gospel is marshaled, first, to prove *the antiquity* of the gospel by *external* witness; second, to show that external testimony abounds, which indicates John as the author; and third, that the gospel itself strongly corroborates this testimony, and, indeed, excludes any other person from its authorship. We shall pursue this method in presenting the evidence so far as at present known.

Let it be remembered that Baur placed the composition of the gospel at 160-170 A.D.; that Keim pushed it back to c. 110 A.D., afterwards withdrawing this admission, when he saw that such a date was inconsistent with his other positions which could not then be maintained, and placing it at about 130 A.D.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ANTIQUITY OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

#### *External Testimony, 180-200 A.D.*

**External Evidence.** From the time of Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, we are on thoroughly firm footing so far as external testimony to our gospel is concerned. This bishop, in the third book of his treatise, *Against Heresies*, quotes abundantly from the fourth gospel. He shows, by quotations which are exact in their agreement with the gospel text, that he had that text before him, and in about the shape, so far as his quotations go, in which we now have it. For instance, in Chap. xi, he says: "John the disciple of the Lord . . . . thus commenced his teaching in the gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made. What was made was life in him, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.' "

This is a clear and unmistakable quotation from the prologue of John's gospel. Again, in Chap. xiv, we find: "And again, the Lord replied to Philip, who wished to

behold the Father, ‘Have I been so long a time with you, and yet thou hast not known me, Philip? He that sees me, sees also the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? For I am in the Father and the Father in me; and henceforth ye know him and have seen him.’” This is clearly a quotation, with a change of tense, from John xiv. 7, 9, 10. Not to multiply quotations, we need mention only that Tischendorf says that Irenæus quotes John’s gospel eighty times. But not only does Irenæus show by quoting that he was familiar with our gospel; he also goes on to give certain mystic reasons why there should be just *four* gospels, no more and no less.

After a most exacting criticism, scrutinizing all that he has said on this topic, no other conclusion is possible than that his four gospels are those which we now have. He so characterizes the gospels, giving the salient features of each and calling them by the names they now bear, that no other identification is possible. So that so far as the gospels were concerned, in his time, the canon was closed. If our gospel had made its appearance only in 160-170 A.D. (Baur), could it have become so firmly established by 180 A.D. as to merit the place it has in Irenæus?

From another quarter of the world, only a very little later than Irenæus, we have unequivocal testimony, evincing the catholicity of the acceptance of our gospel at the end of the second century. Clement of Alexandria, fl. 190-203 A.D. adds his confirmation to the existence of the fourth gospel. He tells the order in which the gos-

pels were composed, deriving his information from "the oldest Presbyters." The gospels which contain the genealogies were written first, then Mark; "But John, last of all, perceiving that what had reference to the body in the gospel of our Saviour, was sufficiently detailed, and being encouraged by his familiar friends, and urged by the Spirit, wrote a spiritual gospel" (see Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vi, 14). His employment of the Johannean gospel is undisputed, while it is noticeable that John i. 3 runs through his works almost like a refrain in a Hebrew psalm. We need cite only a few passages to show his use of our book. In *Stromata*, iii, 12, he quotes John vi. 27: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which abideth unto life eternal." In *Stromata*, v, 3, he remarks: "Now the word of God says, 'I am the truth' (John xiv. 6)," and he constantly refers to our Lord as "the Word." Again in the same work he has undoubtedly John iii. 30 before him, for he writes: "'I must decrease,' said the prophet John [the Baptist], and the Word of the Lord alone, in which the law terminates, 'increase.'" These are but a few of the scores of quotations this father furnishes from the Johannean gospel.

Our next witness is earlier than  
**Theophilus of** those we have mentioned, and it will be  
**Antioch,** noticed that our testimony may be de-  
**115-188 A.D.** scribed as coming from points on the arc of a circle, the centre of which is Rome. This writer furnishes a very suggestive example of the peculiar difficulties which the defenders of the genuineness of the fourth gospel have to meet, which will be illustrated still further as we proceed in our discussion.

Theophilus of Antioch, in Syria, is supposed to have been born about 115 A.D. The date of his death is variously placed at 181 and 188 A.D. The undisputed book of his, which we have, is a treatise called *To Autolycus*, written not much later than 177 A.D., perhaps about 180. Another work supposed to be by him, a *Commentary on the Gospels*, is still under discussion, and as the matter is not yet settled, we are not entitled to quote it. If it be by Theophilus, it is probably earlier than the *Ad Autolycum*. In the unquestioned work by this writer there are several references which look as though they were from our gospel, but as they have affinities with other passages in the New Testament and other writings, the opponents have strenuously denied that they show any dependence on John.

**Doubtful Passages.** We are in this matter brought face to face with that fact which, as we have said, is exceedingly embarrassing to those who defend Johannean authorship, viz., that early writers are often inexact in their quotations, frequently giving the idea but not the very words of the sacred text. Thus Bk. i, 13, "A seed of wheat, for example, or of the other grains, when it is cast into the earth, first dies and rots away, then is raised, and becomes a stalk of corn," reminds us of John xii. 24, and also of 1 Cor. xv. 36, with both of which it has affinity, though it comes closer to the passage from the gospel. "The next chapter opens," says Watkins (Bampton Lectures, p. 30), "with the words, 'Be not therefore without faith, but have faith,' which at once remind us of, though they are not quite identical with, our Lord's words to

S. Thomas: ‘Be not faithless, but believing.’” Other passages might be adduced in which the unprejudiced reader would see at once the reference to the last of the gospels, but they are disputed by the opponents. Fortunately we have in Bk. ii, Chap. 22, so clear a quotation that it cannot be explained away. The passage is as follows: “And hence the holy writings teach us, and all the Spirit-bearing men, one of whom, John, says, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,’ showing that at first God was alone and the Word in him. Then he says, ‘The word was God; all things came into existence through him; and apart from him not one thing came into existence.’” Were it not for this quotation so decisive of the use of the fourth gospel by Theophilus, all knowledge of that book would have been denied him by the assailants of its genuineness. This brings us to a principle that should be enunciated here, viz., that when once in a given composition a clear quotation from a disputed book has been found, there is an increase in the probability that many other passages in that writing seeming to refer to that book really do so refer, and hence a gain in evidential value results; and the more there are of these passages, the more strongly corroborative and cumulative do they become. We shall have occasion to speak of this again when we come to deal with the Clementine Homilies, to which it especially applies. Meanwhile in the case of Theophilus the application of the principle is of no little value.

*Ad Autolycum,  
ii, 24, c. 171 A.D.*

Clementine  
Homilies; date?

The Clementine Homilies, to which we next direct our attention, is a case in point. The story of the array of the Clementines against the assailants of our gospel is an interesting and instructive one. During the heyday of the Tübingen School it was strongly maintained that in this work there was no sign of dependence upon the fourth gospel. In fact, in 1853, Zeller asserted that one would seek in vain in the Clementines for indications of that book. It happened that the manuscripts on which the printed editions were based were defective, breaking off in the middle of Chap. xiv of Bk. xix. Thus one whole book and part of another were missing. In the part then known were several references which were claimed by the defenders of the Johannean authorship, but their opponents refused to allow the claim. The late Prof. Lagarde cited fifteen instances of quotation from or reference to St. John. Others might be given. In 1837, Dr. Dressel found in the Ottobonian Library at Rome a manuscript of the fourteenth century which contained the conclusion to the Homilies. Owing to Dr. Dressel's illness this was not published till 1853. Then it was discovered that seven chapters from the place where the break occurred, or in Chap. xxii, we have the following passage: "Whence our Teacher, when we inquired of him in regard to the man who was blind from his birth, and recovered his sight, if this man sinned, or his parents, that he should be born blind, answered, 'Neither did he sin at all, nor his parents, but that the power of God might be made manifest through him in healing the sins of ignorance.'" Here is an incontrovertible quotation

from John ix. 2, 3, for not only is the agreement unusually close, but the incident of the healing of the man blind from his birth is told only by the author of the fourth gospel. This is the more pertinent to our discussion in view of the fact noted above, that in the very year of the publication of the missing chapters so sweeping and confident an assertion had been made as that of Zeller. Of course, when one unmistakable quotation had been discovered, the possibility that other traces of the gospel might be found became not merely a probability but almost a certainty.

**Doubt as to Date of the Clementines.** We must not, however, overestimate the value of the testimony of the Clementines, looked at from the standpoint of antiquity. There is a wider range of date given to them than to any other really ancient Christian document of which we know. They have been placed all the way along from 160 A.D. to 250. It is certain that part of the Homilies were written before 211 A.D. Probably they were not all published at one time. The real value of the testimony lies in this: It is a fresh proof that almost every discovery of early Christian literature brings to light some corroboration of older evidence or some new witness to the Johannine authorship of the last gospel. It is significant that no new support arises to help the cause of those who refuse to credit that evangel to the disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast. The only notable exceptions to the former of these statements (they are not exceptions to the latter) are the *Apology of Aristides* and *The Teaching of the Apostles* in which there is probably no quotation from the fourth gospel.

The *theorem* with which we set out has, we believe, been established, viz., that subsequent to 180 A.D. the testimony to the fourth gospel is incontrovertible. Not a tithe of the evidence that can be marshaled has been given. We have, for instance, not touched on Tertullian in North Africa. All we have attempted, all we can attempt to do, is simply to indicate from what different quarters, and with what decisiveness, the evidence compels the conclusion of the universal reception of the fourth gospel as a sacred writing at least as early as the date mentioned.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EXTERNAL EVIDENCES, MOSTLY PRIOR TO 180 A.D.

We have now, taking c. 180 A.D. as  
**Sources of** our starting point, to trace the influence  
**Authorities.** of the gospel we are studying backward  
as far as we can. There are a number of statements  
made by prominent writers, whose works have for the  
most part been lost, the only remains of which are  
quotations in later writers. It must be premised that in  
relying on these quotations we are on perfectly safe  
ground, since we are able to test the accuracy of many of  
the quotations by comparing those which are taken from  
works now extant with the originals. *The Ecclesiastical  
History of Eusebius*, written subsequently to 324 A.D., is  
the source of most of these. Indeed the principal value of  
this work consists of its “mostly literal extracts from  
foreign, and in some cases now extinct, sources”  
(Schaff’s *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. iii,  
p. 877).

**Polycrates of** The first of this army of witnesses  
**Ephesus, c. 190 A.D.** is to be found in the evidence of  
Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, referred to by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii, 31, and quoted in  
v. 24. The occasion was the controversy respecting the  
day of the Easter celebration. In a letter to Victor,

bishop of Rome, he says: “ We . . . observe the genuine day, neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom. For in Asia great lights have fallen asleep, . . . Philip, . . . and his two aged virgin daughters, . . . moreover, John, *who rested upon the bosom of the Lord* (see John xiii. 25, ‘the Lord’ being substituted for ‘Jesus,’ otherwise the words exactly correspond), . . . is buried at Ephesus; also Polycarp of Smyrna, . . . Thraseas, . . . Sagaris, . . . Papirius; and Melito . . . *all these* observed the fourteenth day of the Passover ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. Moreover, I, Polycrates, who am the least of all of you, according to the tradition of my relatives, some of whom I have followed. For there were seven, my relatives, bishops, and I am the eighth; and my relatives *always observed* the day when the people *threw away the leaven.*” There were two parties in the early church, one of which considered the Christian Passover as a movable festival, and celebrated it on the first day of the week, or Sunday. The other party appealed to the authority of John and Philip, and, like Polycrates in the extract above, to *the fourth gospel*, in support of the 14th Nisan as the day of celebration. The fourth gospel stands alone in seeming to make the 14th Nisan the day of suffering of our Lord. Apart from the question of the paschal controversy, the verbal coincidence with John xiii. 25 in the description of John is too close to be fortuitous. But still more significant than this is the appeal to the practice of the “great lights” prior to himself who observed the day indicated not by the synoptists but by the author of the fourth gospel.

**Claudius Apollinaris  
or Apollinaris,  
fl. c. 166-171 A.D.**

Claudius Apollinaris, or Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, was a bishop whose writings were widely known, highly esteemed, and generally received. In fragments, preserved in the Chronicon Paschale, and generally allowed to Apollinaris, he refers to the difference between the synoptic gospels and the last one. He also says: “The same [the Son of God] was pierced in his holy side; the same that poured forth again the two purifying elements, water and blood.” Here the reference can be only to John xix. 34, or as some claim, but with small probability, to an oral tradition. The synoptic gospels say nothing of the piercing of the side and the issue of water and blood.

**Melito of Sardis,  
fl. 160-180.**

Another bishop whose literary activity was very great, but whose writings have almost entirely perished, was Melito, bishop of Sardis. This early writer, in a fragment which is supposed to date from about the year 165, A.D., shows a knowledge of John’s gospel by alluding, in an argument for the divinity of Jesus, to his works and miracles which were wrought for *three years*. His words are as follows: “For being God, and at the same time perfect man, he himself displayed to us his two natures—his deity by the signs during the three years after the baptism, and his humanity during the thirty years preceding his baptism.” This is in opposition to what the synoptics, *apart from the fourth gospel*, seem to indicate. Without the “spiritual gospel,” we should be left to infer a ministry extending over only one year.

An epistle to the churches of Asia from the churches

of Vienne and Lyons, dated about 177 A.D. (probably),  
**Epistle of Vienne and Lyons, 177 A.D.** has, "Then was fulfilled the declar-  
ation of our Lord, that the day would come when every one that slayeth you will think that he doeth God a service." Compare John xvii. 2.

**Athenagoras of Athens, 177 A.D.** From the citadel of Greek culture, Athens, comes our next witness. This is Athenagoras, an Athenian philosopher, who embraced Christianity and presented to the Emperors Aurelius Antoninus and Aurelius Commodus a *Plea for the Christians*. The tenth chapter of this writing is based upon the prologue to the fourth gospel, although there are not more than four or five consecutive words quoted. Thus he says: "We acknowledge one God, . . . . by whom the universe has been created through his Logos, and set in order, and is kept in being, . . . . But the Son of God is the Logos of the Father . . . . ; for after the pattern of him and *by him were all things made . . . .*" The dependence on our gospel here is not to be denied.

The testimony now to be brought under inspection is the fragment on the resurrection, to **Fragment "On the Resurrection," c. 150 A.D.** which the date c. 150 A.D. is assigned and generally conceded. This speaks of "The Logos of God who became his Son came to us clothed in flesh, revealing both himself and the Father, giving to us in himself the resurrection from the dead and the eternal life which follows." In this passage there are references to John i. 1, 14, xiv. 9, and xi. 25, 26. Nowhere but in the fourth gospel at

that time was the idea of the Logos brought into connection with the incarnation.

The foregoing testimonies taken **Tatian the Syrian,** individually are perhaps not of such **110-172 A.D.**

great weight. But one characteristic of the argument for the genuineness of the fourth gospel is that there are so many minor indices, all of which point in the same direction. These testimonies are cumulative. The deponent whom we next introduce is Tatian the Syrian, one whose affirmation belongs among the most decisive of the witnesses to be given for the gospel. The dates we have given are those agreed on by Zahn and Harnack, who do not generally stand on the same ground. Funk puts the first date ten years later. Tatian was a pupil, perhaps a convert, of Justin Martyr, and this relationship to Justin is one on which much stress will be laid when we come to treat of the latter's testimony to our gospel. This father is of great value to the defenders of the Johannean authorship for two reasons. He wrote,

**"Address to the Greeks."** about 153 A.D., an *Address to the Greeks* in which he quotes, with an

implication that they are well-known words, "The darkness comprehendeth not the light" (John i. 5). He has also the following from the gospel, "God is a Spirit" (John iv. 24); "All things were made by him, and without him not one thing was made" (John i. 3). In these quotations he agrees very closely with the ancient Curetonian Syriac version. If he had left us no more than this, he would have deserved our thanks. But we are principally indebted to him for a work the story of the recovery of which is fascinating. We knew

from notices in the writings of Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Tatian's Harmony. Theodoret, that Tatian had compiled a harmony of four gospels which he called "The [Gospel] by Four," but no copy was known to have survived, and the general opinion was that it was irretrievably lost. It became known also that Ephraem Syrus wrote a commentary on this Diatessaron or Harmony, but that too had disappeared. It was discovered, however, in an Armenian version, on two manuscripts about seven hundred years old. This Armenian text was published in 1836, a Latin translation was made and given out in 1841, and a revised translation was published in 1876. From these sources the indefatigable Dr. Zahn undertook to reconstruct the Diatessaron with results that have subsequently been proved excellent. This achievement in itself was wonderful, but still greater things were to follow. It became known that in the Vatican Library

Its Discovery. was an Arabic manuscript which was

in some way closely related to the Diatessaron. After some time, still another manuscript was found in Egypt, and in 1888 both were edited by Ciasca, the two manuscripts admirably supplementing each other, and furnishing a complete text, the Egyptian manuscript particularly professing to be a translation of the Syriac of the Harmony. Ciasca furnished a Latin rendering, and a comparison of the Latin, the Armenian, and the Arabic versions shows beyond doubt that we have the long lost Diatessaron of the Syrian.

When attention was drawn to the Diatessaron, the question was asked, Which are the four gospels used? Are they our four? If this were so, the inference was imme-

diate that at the time of the compilation of the Harmony those four and those only were received as canonical in the region where Tatian was at home. We had heard that it began with a quotation from St. John's gospel. We have now ascertained this to be the case, and that the gospels used were our gospels and those only. Furthermore,

Uses our Four  
Gospels.

Dr. Harman has calculated that the Diatessaron has used about seventy-seven per cent. of Matthew, fifty per cent. of Mark, seventy-five per cent. of Luke, and *ninety* per cent. of John!

It has been shown, also, that the Arabic versions show a very much closer agreement with the Curetonian Syriac than with the Greek of the gospels. We have, then, a Harmony of our four gospels, constructed at any rate by 170 A.D., and perhaps by 160. And this Harmony *begins and ends* with passages from the fourth gospel! In all probability Tatian used an existing Syriac translation and did not translate for himself. The original gospels must therefore have existed for some time prior to Tatian's use of them. Dr. Harnack's conclusion is as follows: "We learn from the Diatessaron that about 160 A.D. our four gospels had already taken a place of prominence in the Church and that no others had done so; that in particular the fourth gospel had taken a fixed place alongside of the three 'synoptics.' Add to this the fact that in his (Tatian's) *Address* written c. 153 A.D., the words, 'The darkness comprehendeth not the light,' are quoted as though well known, we get at once the impression that the gospel with which we are concerned had already been long in use."

**The Old Latin and  
Syriac Versions,  
150-170 A.D.**

Mention of the two early versions should be made right here, for two reasons, viz. : the proximity in time, and the similarity in value of evidence,

to that we derive from Tatian's Diatessaron. The versions of which we speak are the "Old Latin" (not the Vulgate, which is much later), and the "Old Syriac" or "Curetonian" (not the Peshito, which is also later). Drs. Liddon and Westcott are agreed that the former was written prior to 170 A.D., and the agreement remarked on above between Tatian's Harmony and the Curetonian Syriac implies for the latter a date prior to 160 A.D., probably 150-160 A.D., though Dr. Westcott puts it *within* the first half of the second century, *i. e.*, before 150 A.D. Both of these versions are known to have contained the fourth gospel.

**Muratorian Frag-  
ment, date?**

Yet another valuable piece of evidence must be placed here. This is the celebrated Muratorian fragment, without title, defective at the beginning and the end, discovered by Muratori in Milan, published by him in 1740, and professing to be by a contemporary of Pius, bishop of Rome, 139-156 (outside dates are given). This fragment is written in very corrupt Latin, which is generally allowed to be a translation from an original in Greek verse. The authorship has been assigned to Caius of Rome and to Hegesippus, but this is nothing more than conjecture. The date of the fragment is generally, in fact all but universally, placed A.D. 170 or earlier. But lately there is a disposition to accept a later date nearer the beginning of the third century. The fragment has been considered the

earliest list of the books considered canonical by the Christians. But no matter what the date, we shall see that its testimony is most weighty. In this we find the following: “The fourth gospel is that of John, one of the disciples. When his fellow-disciples and bishops entreated him, he said, ‘fast ye now with me for the space of three days, and let us recount to each other whatever may be revealed to each of us.’ In the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that John should narrate all things in his own name, they revising them. . . . Thus [John] professed himself to be not only the eye-witness but also the hearer; and besides that, the historian of all the wondrous facts concerning the Lord in their order.”

The first thing noticeable about this excerpt is the order of the gospels. The fourth of the fragment is our fourth. Next, the authorship is ascribed to John. If we except the statement by Theophilus, possibly not excepting even that, this may be the earliest mention of John as the author. We must not neglect to call attention to what, curiously enough, has not been given its full force in the argument, namely, the legendary character of the story of the origin. There are two possible explanations of this: it may denote that the origin of the fragment was later than 170 A.D., or it may indicate that the gospel had been composed so much earlier than 170 A.D. that sufficient time had elapsed to allow the growth of the legend. Even supposing a late date for the fragment, the legend must have taken years to assume the form in which we have it. If the second explanation, to which we incline,

Value of its  
Testimony.

be correct, how far back must the composition of the gospel necessarily be put! But not less significant than even this is the fact that the writer mentions John "exactly as he mentions Luke or Paul, so as to leave the reader under the impression that he is speaking of things universally acknowledged" (Luthardt, *Comm. on John*, Engl. transl., i, 203).

## CHAPTER V.

### JUSTIN MARTYR.

**Justin Martyr,** † 166 A.D. “Justin Martyr is perhaps the most important authority among the fathers for the genuineness of John’s gospel, both on account of his proximity in time to the apostle, and, notwithstanding the assertion of some critics, the distinctness of his references.” So says Gloag in his *Introduction to the Johannine Writings*, p. 102. It is to this father’s testimony that we now turn. We are again slightly embarrassed by a doubt as to the dates to be assigned. The most general consensus is upon the death date, which nearly all scholars place in 166 A.D. The limits of his literary activity are by good authorities considered to have been narrowed from 130–166 A.D. to 140–150 A.D. Dr. Hoyt places the first Apology in 145–146 A.D., and the second in the following year. Another date for the first Apology, accepted by the high authorities, Drs. Caspari and Harnack, is 138–139 A.D. We are, if the earlier date be correct, getting perilously near the times of the Apostle John.

Justin’s extant writings are quite numerous and are exceedingly important looked at from every standpoint. Especially precious for our purpose are his two Apologies and the Dialogue with Trypho.

In weighing the evidence of Justin, one must ever keep in mind the purpose of his writing. His first Apology is addressed to the Emperor, Senate and people of Rome, who did not accept the Christian writings, to which, therefore, Justin could not refer as authoritative. If then in this writing there are citations from our gospel, they will not be formal quotations, but will be likely to appear as indirect allusions. A similar conclusion holds with reference to the Dialogue with Trypho, a *Jew*, for whom New Testament writings had no authority.

No one can read Justin without noticing the frequency of the occurrence of the term "Memoirs."   
**The "Memoirs."** Sometimes it is simply the "Memoirs," as when he says, "I have learned from the Memoirs" (Trypho, cv). Sometimes the phrase is expanded and we have "Memoirs of the Apostles" as in First Apology, lxvii, "the Memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits." Again the phrase becomes "The Memoirs of His [Christ's] Apostles," as in the Dialogue, ci. These "Memoirs" are in one place closely identified by the words, "The Apostles in the Memoirs composed by them which are called gospels" (First Apology, lxvi). The part they played in Christian worship is indicated in the First Apology, Chap. lxvii: "On the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the Memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read as long as time permits." The subject and the authors are treated in other extracts (1 Apol., xxxiii): "Memoirs of all things which relate to our Lord Jesus Christ,"

and (Dialogue, ciii), “. . . . The Memoirs which I say were composed by His Apostles and those who followed them.”

Their Position  
and Use.

Concerning these Memoirs it is fitting that we notice the position they occupied before we determine exactly what they were. We have noted the use to which they were put in the Christian assemblies. They were read alongside of “the Prophets,” and had we quoted further, we should have found they were commented upon in the same way. The “Memoirs” and “the Prophets” stood on equal footing apparently; we know that “the Prophets” were regarded as sacred books by the Christians, hence the “Memoirs” were also sacred books. We are likewise told of their contents: they were “Memoirs of all things which relate to Jesus Christ,” that is, were histories which centred in Jesus. Furthermore they were written by the “Apostles and *those who followed them.*”

Now but one thing is lacking to make the identification of these “Memoirs” with our gospels in the highest degree probable before proceeding to trace their contents as revealed in this or that saying. Had Justin ever said that there were four of these memoirs, from data no more definite than we have already before us, we should have concluded at once that they were our gospels. But this he did not say. We have been compelled, therefore, to compare, page by page and line by line, what Justin says of the memoirs with the contents of our gospels. The result is that we find he had used our four gospels. Of course we are not concerned to prove here his use of the synoptics; we wish however to point out one thing,

viz., the close connection between Irenæus and Justin, that they were contemporaries, were probably in Rome together, that Irenæus looks on Justin as his master, and quotes him often, and that Irenæus holds to *four* gospels and those four the very ones which we possess. What other conclusion could we draw *à priori*, than that Justin's "Memoirs" are Irenæus' gospels and therefore ours? As to the first three gospels no doubt has been entertained. The question has always been, did he know our fourth gospel? That question has been answered in the affirmative so fully and decisively that no other possibility now remains. The late Dr. Ezra Abbot is the man who more than any other has contributed to this result.

The following are the passages which demonstrate Justin's use of the fourth gospel.  
<sup>Quotations in Justin.</sup>

In the First Apology, Chap. lxi, we read, "For Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Now that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs, is evident to all." Of course this is derived at once from John iii. 5. In the sixth chapter of the Second Apology we have the following, which, while not strictly a quotation, shows its dependence on the prologue of the John gospel: "And his Son, who alone is properly called Son, the Logos, who was also with him and was begotten before the works, when at first he created and arranged all things by him, is called Christ, in reference to his being anointed and God's ordering all things through him." In the *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chap. lxxxviii, we have the following reference to

John i. 20-23: "For when John [the Baptist] sat by the Jordan, . . . men supposed him to be Christ; but he cried to them, 'I am not the Christ, but the voice of one crying; . . . .' " This saying of the Baptist is found in the fourth gospel and nowhere else. In Chap. xci of the same writing is found a somewhat far-fetched exegesis of John iii. 14; and in Chap. cv we find, "For I have already proved that he was *the only-begotten of the Father* of all things, being begotten in a peculiar manner, word and power by him, and having become man through the Virgin *as we have learned through the memoirs.*" The italicized words are from John i. 14. Notice the source from whence he learns this—the Memoirs; but only our gospel teaches explicitly the preëxistence of Jesus.

Dr. Ezra Abbot marks, as among his conclusions, that Justin's references to the *Logos as incarnated* point indubitably to John's prologue, and Dr. Westcott points out that the synoptists do not anywhere declare Jesus' preëxistence. Another very strong indication of the use of the fourth gospel by Justin is the allusion to the cure of congenital diseases, mentioned only by John. Justin also says that "the apostles [notice the plural] have written" concerning the descent of the Spirit as a dove at the baptism of Jesus. Only Matthew and John, the two *apostolic* writers of gospels, speak of this—an incidental but very weighty allusion. We have also seen that Justin affirms the Memoirs to have been written by "the apostles and those who followed them." This allows for gospels written by, at least, *two* apostles and *two* apostolic followers, just what we learn from other sources is the case

Dr. Abbot's  
Conclusions.

with our gospels. This may be a mere coincidence ; but, if so, it is a very remarkable one.

Dr. Abbot sums up as follows : "The positive reasons for believing that Justin derived his quotations from [the fourth gospel] are : (1) The fact that in no other report of the teaching of Christ, except of John, do we find the figure of the new birth ; (2) the insistence in both Justin and John on the necessity of the new birth to the entrance into the kingdom of heaven ; (3) its mention in both in connection with baptism ; (4) and last and most important of all, the fact that Justin's remark on the impossibility of a second natural birth is such a platitude, in the form in which he presents it, that we cannot regard it as original."

**Objections to Dr. Abbot's Inferences.** Several protests have been entered against the inference from the above passages that Justin used John. One objection is that the passages show variations from the Johannine text as we have them, that they are not sufficiently close to be quotations. The answer to this is : first, that alongside of the quotation from John is one from Isaiah, which is just as loosely made ; secondly, several of the variations found in Justin are found in other fathers, and just as the first passage is blended in Justin with a reminiscence of Matt. xviii. 3, so is it in Clement of Alexandria ; thirdly, it was the habit of the fathers to quote loosely, to abridge, transpose, combine and translate ; fourthly, not a single variation in Justin from the text but has its *numerous* parallels in ancient *and modern* writers.

Another objection that has been raised is that the author of the fourth gospel borrowed from Justin. The

only answer possible to this is that the eye which can discern such a relationship, which can see in a work so original as the gospel a dependence upon an author so different in that particular as Justin, is certainly in need of treatment. Even the most unrelenting of the opponents of the genuineness of our gospel have not thought this argument worth repeating.

The point has been raised that Justin derived his Logos doctrine not from the gospel but from Philo. To this the decisive reply is that Philo never treats of the Logos as *incarnated*. Remember that this is the centre of John's doctrine, that he treats not only of "the Word" but of "the Word *made flesh*," and that in this Justin follows him throughout, and the objection falls at once.

Of the scantiness of Justin's employment of the gospel much has also been made. Why did he not use it more to support his exposition of the Logos? To this the answer is: (1) Albrecht Thoma has investigated the *Literary Relation of Justin to Paul and to John's Gospel*, and reaches the conclusion that Justin uses almost every chapter of the Logos gospel, and some chapters very fully; (2) the argument from scantiness of quotation would bear almost as heavily upon the Mark gospel, which is used only a few times, yet the antiquity of which is conceded on all sides; (3) at most this proves that gospel history was current in synoptic form.

In line with this last objection is the question, Why has Justin not used John as he has the synoptists for the history? The reply is that we cannot tell. But we must point to the precariousness of a negative argument as illustrated above in the case of Mark.

An objection resembling the foregoing is interposed in the statement that John is quoted in the *Dialogue* as the author of the Apocalypse ; why not then of the fourth gospel ? To this, perhaps, the best, and certainly a sufficient answer, is that in the dialogue, John, though one of the best known apostles, is introduced as a *stranger* to the *Jew*. In the apologies, Justin addressed heathen who did not know the apostles, and to whom the names would be meaningless. And, besides, Justin was followed in this practice by the apologists down to the time of Eusebius.

An *a priori* difficulty has been urged, that John contradicted the synoptics and therefore could not have been used by Justin. But all four gospels were certainly current side by side toward the close of the century, when the objection would be as good as in Justin's time.

**Review of the Evidence.** A brief review may be advantageous here. We have spoken of the universal reception within the church of the Johannine gospel from A.D. 180 on. We have illustrated its unquestioned use by Irenæus of Lyons and Clement of Alexandria, have hinted at the corroborative testimony of Tertullian at Carthage, and have called Theophilus of Antioch, Polycrates of Ephesus, Melito of Sardis, and Athenagoras of Athens, as witnesses from the East. We have shown the currency of the gospel in the Syrian church by the abundant use Tatian has made of it, and this currency in ancient times has been made more sure by the evidence of the Old Latin and Old Syriac versions.

We have traced its existence backward step by step to the beginning of the second third of the second century,

all the time, we must remember, not as a new gospel, but as in current use among Christians.

We have found citations from it in Justin at a date which is variously put from A.D. 138 to 145. This early father cited it as one of the "Memoirs" which he identified with the "Gospels." If his First Apology was written even so late as 145 A.D., we can hardly allow less than a generation for the gospel to take the place it has with him, *on the supposition that another than the apostle wrote it.* If the apostle were known to have written it, it would, of course, have gone at once into circulation. But even were it a new composition issued just prior to his Apology (a supposition which is not tenable because of the manner of Justin's employment of it), if it had then been put forth falsely as a composition of the apostle, there were those living who had known John, who would have recognized the spuriousness of the composition and would at once have denounced the effort to palm on the world a fictitious Johannean gospel. We cannot resist the conclusion that if we had no earlier testimony, the witness of Justin places our gospel so far back that it would have been impossible for it to gain currency as a pseudonymous production. Our testimony thus far, let us remember, comes with one exception, the Clementines, from the orthodox Christians of the whole church, East and West.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TESTIMONY OF HERETICAL SECTS.

**The Gospel of Peter; date?** We have had occasion to speak of the rediscovery of Christian literature supposed to be irretrievably lost. We have once again to call attention to a discovery of this sort. Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, vi, 12) has preserved an extract from a letter or work on a "Gospel of Peter" which letter was written by Serapion, bishop of Antioch, A.D. 190-203, to the church of Rhossus. In this letter he interdicts the use of that gospel as being of a docetic character, although he had formerly and without sufficient examination granted permission to read it. Eusebius himself refers to it in several places, and says that it is heretical. We have mention of it also in the works of Jerome, Theodoret, and Origen. The earliest reference to it is the first we have given, which we may place, say, A.D. 192. Several Apocryphal books went under Peter's name, such as the Gospel, an Apocalypse, the Acts of Peter, and the Preaching and Travels of Peter, etc. All of these had disappeared, though it is supposed that we have the Preaching embodied in the Clementines.

**Its Discovery,** Less than seven years ago there was dug up at Akhmîm, in Upper Egypt, a manuscript which lay for six years in Cairo, attracting no

attention. It was not published till late in 1892, and then was found to contain a fragment of the Gospel of Peter, of the Apocalypse of Peter, and of the Book of Enoch. These three documents were all instantly recognized, and their value for critical questions now under discussion was pointed out. We are concerned here only with the Gospel of Peter. The date of this document and date. is not settled. It must be much earlier than A.D. 190, for Serapion either before, or soon after, entering his bishopric, found it in use in a church, and clearly not as a new book. Its composite character, derived as it is from the other gospels (as we shall see), would indicate a date later than some Harmony, say Tatian's, therefore A.D. 160. Yet, on the other hand, it agrees so fully with Luke's gospel as to suggest an earlier origin. It uses also 1 Peter iii. 19. Dr. Martineau is very positive that Justin Martyr has used it in the first Apology, c. xxxv and elsewhere, and if that is the case then c. 130 A.D. must be assigned as the latest date. Other indications tend to strengthen such a conclusion. The tendency is, therefore, to push the composition far back towards the first quarter of the second century. We do not lay stress on this earliest date, though it does not seem unlikely.

Now this newly recovered fragment bears very closely on our problem. We have incidentally called attention to its composite character. It used all <sup>Uses the</sup> the gospels, Luke most of all, then <sup>Fourth Gospel.</sup> Matthew, John, and Mark in the order named. In some of these cases the Greek text of Peter and John is very close. In other cases the idea is borrowed but put into other words. Again there is a very

evident mingling of the text of two or more of our gospels. For example, at the end of the fragment the author has an evident allusion to John xx. 10, xxi. 3 (and Mark ii. 14). Again, the Peter gospel says that the Jews, in revenge on the malefactor who is represented as pleading for Jesus, demand that the *one* malefactor's legs be broken, evidently having in mind, "And they brake the legs of the first" (John xix. 32). So when the fragment has to do with the burial of Jesus, it locates the tomb in "*Joseph's garden.*" Only the fourth gospel mentions the garden. It also makes the women in coming to the sepulchre stoop down to look in, probably borrowing this from John xxv, where *Peter* stoops down. This language is found in the *common text* of Luke, into which it has probably crept from a marginal reference to John. So too the fragment says they crucified Jesus "*in the midst,*" that they clad him with purple (here from John xix. 2). More important is the fact that the false Peter misunderstood John xix. 13, understanding the verb in a transitive sense, viz., that "*Pilate brought Jesus forth and set him on the judgment seat.*"

These are by no means all of the coincidences with the fourth gospel. Others quite as remarkable can be traced. Probably enough has been said to make the use of our gospel evident. For those who wish to pursue this line of investigation nothing has yet appeared so useful as Dr. H. Von Schubert's *Das Petrus evangelium*, Berlin, July, 1893.

What we are principally concerned with is that, whatever be the final conclusion regarding the date of the Petrine fragment, there is no doubt that it is based partly

upon the Johannean gospel. We must also note that the gospel of Peter was condemned by Serapion on the ground that it favored the heresy of docetism, distinct traces of which the fragment is considered to show, though Dr. McGiffert strenuously denies that taint in the fragment so lately recovered.

We are now to deal with a class of citations, the aggregated weight of which is very great in suggesting the antiquity of the fourth gospel. We find our authority for these largely, though not solely, in Irenæus and Hippolytus. The former wrote his *Against Heresies* sometime prior to 189. In that he cites the *published* works of heresiarchs and their disciples. Time must be allowed for the circulation of these works for them to have become sufficiently prominent to attract his notice, situated as he was, at an outpost of the church. These cited works themselves quote the fourth gospel, especially on the Logos, quote it as well known. What then is the necessary inference regarding the age of that gospel?

The other authority mentioned above, Hippolytus, is no less important for our purpose than Irenæus himself. In fact, the former was a disciple of the latter. Let us remember the nexus we have here, binding Hippolytus with the apostle John. It will add somewhat to the value of the former's testimony. Hippolytus was a disciple of Irenæus, Irenæus of Polycarp, and Polycarp of John. Hippolytus wrote, among other works, a *Commentary on the Apocalypse and Gospel of John*, and, which is our immediate concern, a *Refutation of all Heresies*. This latter is of especial value, because of its quotations of leaders

of heretical sects, who based their systems upon the John gospel.

The class of citations to which we refer, then, is taken from heretical writers. These may be divided into three types, agreeing with the schools of gnosticism. We shall study the school of Marcion, of Valentinus, and of Basilides.

**Marcion**  
fl. A.D. 130-165. The founder of the first of these, Marcion, a contemporary of Polycarp, flourished A.D. 130-165, founding in Rome a sect which thrived for a century and left its traces in church life as late as the tenth century. He formed a canon of his own, a mutilated gospel of Luke and ten Pauline epistles. The other gospels and the rest of the New Testament writings he rejected, not because of any doubt as to their apostolicity, but because they were thought by him to lean too strongly toward Judaism, to which he was opposed, or because he considered that the writers were imperfectly enlightened. Both Tertullian

**Rejected Fourth Gospel.** and Irenæus *assume* that he knew and rejected the fourth gospel among the

rest, and *not a single word has come down to us* intimating that this assumption was ever challenged. Tertullian declares in plain words, though the passage is too long to be quoted here, that the "evangelical instrument" has "apostles" and "apostolic men" as its authors, whom he afterward identifies (and notice the pairing) as John and Matthew, Luke and Mark. He goes on to say: "Now of the authors whom we possess, Marcion seems to have singled out Luke for his mutilating process" (*Against Marcion*, iv, 3). In his work on

*The Flesh of Christ*, Chap. iii, Tertullian returns to the charge in the words: "If you [Marcion] had not purposely REJECTED in some instances and corrupted in others, the Scriptures opposed to your opinion, you would have been confuted by the gospel of John." But a man cannot "reject" that of which he knows nothing, nor be confuted by what does not exist, therefore Marcion, according to Tertullian, knew our gospel.

Again in the work *Against Marcion*, iv, On Basis of Gal. ii. 11-14. 3, Tertullian remarks: "Marcion, finding the epistle to the Galatians, in which Paul accuses the apostles themselves of not walking in the truth of the gospel . . . . strives by means of that to destroy confidence in the gospels which are published in the name of *the apostles*, and also of *apostolical men* . . . ." Nothing clearer can be deducted from this than that Marcion discredited our gospel, especially when it is remembered whom Tertullian means by "apostles and apostolical men." And this argues the existence of John's gospel in Marcion's time, for Tertullian's *Evangelical Instrument* is his name for the four gospels.

We come next to the Valentinians, including the founder Valentinus (was active 138-160 A.D.), and his personal disciples, Heracleon and Ptolemaeus (fl. 170-180 A.D.).

In our study of this period we have to be continually on **A Caution.** our guard in one particular. Our authorities (Irenæus, Hippolytus, Clement) are expounding the system of the Valentinians and Basilidians. We need to watch, lest we mistake a quotation from the system as worked out for a *personal* quotation,

or citation of the founder of the school. There are, however, sufficiently clear cases of personal citation, so that we need feel no doubt whatever as to the individual knowledge of our gospel.

Irenæus gives us, in his writing *Against Heresies*, i, 8, 5, an exposition by the *Valentinians* of part of the prologue of John's gospel. The Latin of the passage ends with the words, "and so says Ptolemaeus," intimating that the exegesis is fl. 170-180 A.D. his. In the same chapter is a quotation of a clause of John xii. 27: "And what shall I say?" with the exegetical addition: "I know not." Epiphanius (*Heresies*, xxxiii, 3-7) has preserved a letter by Ptolemaeus to Flora, in which occurs the quotation: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made," with the formula, "The apostle says." Here is a *personal* acceptance of the gospel by Ptolemaeus.

Heracleon, another disciple of Valentinus, is known to have written a commentary on the fourth gospel—in fact fl. 150-160 A.D. the first one known—portions of which have been preserved for us by Origen. The nature of the exegesis proves that the commentator looked on the text as authoritative and inspired. Quotations here, with this undisputed fact before us, would be a waste of space and time. One important fact needs to be recalled, viz., that for a religious book to become the text of a commentary requires that it should be considered authoritative and of established use in church. But at the time of Heracleon, the fourth gospel occupied so eminent a position as to induce him to comment on it, and yet necessitated his so

wresting its text and meaning as to suggest to Origen the task of refuting him.

Valentinus (flourished c. 140 A.D.), the founder of this school, also supplies us with evidence. Tertullian says of him (*On Prescription Against Heretics*, cxxxviii): “For although Valentinus seems to use the entire instrument, he has none the less laid violent hands on the truth, only with more cunning mind and skill than Marcion. Marcion expressly . . . used the knife, not the pen . . . Valentinus, however, abstained from such excision, because he did not invent Scriptures to square with his own subject matter, but adapted his matter to the Scriptures: yet he took away more, and added more, by removing the proper meaning . . . and adding fantastic arrangement of things . . .” We are to remember that Tertullian uses the phrase “Evangelical Instrument” as a synonym of our word “gospels.” So Valentinus used these entire, did not mutilate them as did Marcion. That Valentinus used the gospel of John is clear from Hippolytus (*Refutation of all Heresies*, vi, 30), who tells us, in a *personal* reference to Valentinus: “He says the Saviour observes ‘all that came before Me are thieves and robbers’” (compare John x. 8). In the preceding chapter Hippolytus says that Valentinus calls the devil “The ruler of this world” (see John xii. 31, xvi. 2, and compare xiv. 30). In these passages no one who had not a theory to maintain would see anything but quotation of Valentinus himself. But those who deny the apostolicity of our gospel affirm that Hippolytus refers to the school of Valentinians and not to the master. The sentence before the one containing the words “the ruler

of this world" begins, "The quaternion advocated by *Valentinus*," and no mention of his school intervenes.

**G. Heinrici**, in Germany, has investigated the Valentinian Gnosticism in relation to our gospel and says: "The use that the Valentinians made of Scripture proves that the gospel of John and [certain] epistles . . . were acknowledged writings, and already employed as apostolic writings in the first half of the second century."

**Basilides,** Basilides, who is reckoned to have lived A.D. 65-135? A.D. 65-135, and to have written c. 125 A.D. a commentary on "the Gospel" which may or may not mean the same as Tertullian's "Evangelical Instrument." Exactly what this commentary was critics do not agree in defining. Hippolytus informs us that Basilides claimed to be a disciple of Matthias, who was chosen in the place of Judas Iscariot, and Epiphanius gives us information that tends to corroborate this when he says that Basilides taught at Antioch (one supposed scene of Matthias' activity) before he went to Alexandria.

Here again the adverse critics attempt to discount Hippolytus by saying that he confuses the master with his school. But so careful a critic as **Matthew Arnold** on Basilides. Matthew Arnold, endorsed by Dr. Ezra Abbot, has said, "It is not true that he [Hippolytus] wields the subjectless 'he says' in the random manner alleged [confusing master and school], with no other formula for quotation both from the master and from the followers. In general, he uses the formula 'according to them' when he quotes from the school, and

the formula ‘he says’ when he gives the dicta of the master. And in this particular case [referring to the quotations we shall adduce] he manifestly quotes the dicta of Basilides, and no one who had not a theory to serve would ever dream of doubting it. Basilides, therefore, about the

**Basilides Used  
Fourth Gospel.** year 125 of our era, had before him the fourth gospel.” Matthew Arnold, there,

is referring to two passages from Hippolytus’ *Refutation of all Heresies*, vii, 10: “and this, he says, is that which has been stated in the *Gospels*: ‘He was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world:’” The other passage is chapter fifteen of the same book, where we find, “And that each thing, he says, has its own particular times, the Saviour is a sufficient (witness) when he observes, ‘Mine hour is not yet come’” (see John ii. 4). (The reader is referred to an able discussion, on the quotation of Basilides in Hippolytus’ work, by Dr. James Drummond, published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. xi, Part ii, 1892.)

**Dr. Abbot on  
Gnostic Use of  
Fourth Gospel.** Dr. Ezra Abbot, known as a most fair student, concludes his investigations as follows: “In view of all the evidence, then, I think we have good reason for believing that the gospel of John was one of a collection of gospels, probably embracing our four, which Basilides and his followers received as authoritative about the year 125.”

Concerning the use of our gospel by the Gnostics no better statement has been formulated than Dr. Ezra Abbot’s. “The use of the gospel of John by the Gnostic sects, in the second century, affords a strong, it may seem

decisive, argument for its genuineness. However ingeniously they might pervert its meaning, it is obvious . . . . that this gospel is . . . . diametrically opposed to the essential principles of Gnosticism. The Christian Fathers,

Gospel could not have been forged. in their contests with the Gnostics, found it an armory of weapons. Such

being the case, let us suppose it to have been forged about the middle of the second century, in the heat of the Gnostic controversy. It was thus a book which the founders of the Gnostic sects, who flourished ten, twenty, or thirty years before, had never heard of. How . . . . , then, explain the fact that their followers should not only have received it, but have received it, so far as appears, without question or discussion? It must have been received by the founders of these sects from the beginning . . . . But if received by the founders of these sects, it must have been received at the same time by the Catholic Christians. They would not at a later period have taken the spurious work from the heretics with whom they were in controversy. It was then generally received both by Gnostics and their opponents, between the years 120 and 130. What follows? It follows that the Gnostics of that date received it because they could not help it. They would not have admitted the authority of a book which could be reconciled with their doctrines only by the most forced interpretation, if they could have destroyed its authority by denying its genuineness,

Its Genuineness Conclusive. [and] its genuineness could then be easily ascertained. . . . The fact of the reception of the fourth gospel as [John's] work at so early a date, by parties so violently opposed to

each other [as the Gnostics and Catholic Christians], proves that the evidence of its genuineness was conclusive."

The citations by Hippolytus of quotations of John by the Ophites and Peratae are not so decisive as to require their production here.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ALOGI AND THE APPENDIX TO THE GOSPEL.

The Alogi. There remain yet two witnesses to the antiquity of the fourth gospel. We have already

referred (Chap. i) to a party in the early church who denied the apostolicity of the fourth gospel. Irenæus tells us of "vain, unlearned and audacious" men

Mentioned by Irenæus, "who represent the aspects of the gospel as being either more in number than as aforesaid, or, on the other hand, fewer . . . , others . . . , that they may set at naught the gift of the Spirit . . . , do not admit that aspect presented by John's gospel, in which the Lord promised that he would send the Paraclete ; but set aside at once both the gospel

and Epiphanius. and the prophetic spirit" (*Against Heresies*, iii, 11, 9). It is believed that Epiphanius refers to the same party in his *Hæresies*, li, 3, where he nicknames them Alogi (that is, "those who deny the Logos," or "those without reason," for he intends a pun), and says, "For they hold that so-called heresy which rejects the books of John. Since then they do not receive the Logos which was preached by John, they shall be called 'Alogi.' " That is they are represented as rejecting the doctrine of the Logos and the writings of St. John. According to Irenæus they rejected

the doctrine of the Paraclete and of the accompanying gift of prophecy. These two allusions are all we have to this obscure party in the church, though we are sure that Epiphanius gets his information from a lost work of

This Testimony seemingly Adverse. Hippolytus. It might seem at first sight that this denial of the genuineness of our gospel by a party in the early church would militate against our contention.

But we must not forget that all we are attempting now Really not so. is to show the *antiquity* of the fourth gospel.

There are therefore two points of interest in this denial by the Alogi: 1. That they were actuated by dogmatic motives, that they rejected the authorship of John in order to get rid of the gospel which made untenable their own views; 2. Though they denied the genuineness of the gospel, they attributed its composition to Cerinthus, a heretic of the first century and *a contemporary of the Apostle John*. These very people then, instead of contributing something of value to those who deny the genuineness of our gospel, become witnesses for its antiquity. And bearing in mind what has already been said regarding the acceptance of the fourth gospel by heretics and orthodox, and also the further fact that the position of the Alogi was almost instantly assailed, their testimony is particularly weighty.

Probably the earliest testimony we have to the antiquity of the gospel is found in the gospel itself. We must not be misunderstood here as referring to internal testimony. It can with no more correctness be called internal evidence than can the story of Moses' death and burial be

called internal evidence of Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch. This evidence is found in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of the last chapter of John's gospel and reads: "This is that disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

**Conclusion of  
the Gospel an  
Attestation.**

**Its  
Characteristics.**

Concerning this we notice first, that the style of writing is changed, all that precedes has been told in the third person; here we find the first person "we" and "I"; second, the twenty-fourth verse is an identification of the author of the book with the disciple of whom Jesus said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" We shall see that later generations believed this to be said of John, and believed it so persistently that a story got abroad that John did not die but simply went to sleep in his grave, and that the earth over him was disturbed by his breathing.

The self-evident conclusion is that these **Its Source.** verses were not written by the author of the gospel, and that we have here an attestation either real or forged. If it is real the likeliest hypothesis is that it is by those to whom the gospel was first given, *i.e.*, the church of Ephesus. Then the seal of approval would be given by the church, and particularly by the elder in charge after John's death in the name of the

church. This is Mr. Norton's suggestion, and it has met the approval of all but negative critics. If this be the case, we have a contemporary endosal of the book and its writer.

**Not a Forgery.** On the supposition that the attestation is a forgery, Dr. Ezra Abbot has the following:

"Suppose the gospel written by an anonymous forger of the middle of the second century. What possible credit could he suppose would be given to it by an anonymous attestation like this? A forger with such a purpose would have named his pretended authority, and have represented the attestation as formally and solemnly given. The attestation as it stands, clearly presupposes that the author . . . . was known to those who first received the copy of the gospel containing it." Dr. Abbot makes the suggestion, the probability of which is evident at once to every student of New Testament manuscripts, that the endorsement was probably at first written separate from the text or on the margin, and afterwards incorporated with the text—a process exceedingly common in the manuscripts which have come down to us.

**Summary.** We have now summarized the external evidence for the *antiquity* of the fourth gospel. We have traced its employment from the last third of the second century, when it was in use alongside of the other gospels, East, West and South, back to the first quarter of

**Fourth Gospel not Later than First Century.** the century. We have found it used as apostolic by orthodox and heterodox, by Catholic Christians and by Gnostics, by

Montanists and Docetists, and appealed to by all parties in support of their peculiar doctrines. By no

means all of the testimony possible has been adduced. We have not even touched on the possible testimony of Papias and Polycarp, as that testimony is yet most strenuously disputed. But when we find that within thirty years of the time of John's death this gospel is used by Gnostics, during the lifetime of Papias, and of Polycarp, and of hundreds of others who knew John, and within a few years of this by Justin Martyr, who belonged to the orthodox, we see how impossible becomes the hypothesis that it could have been written much, if at all, subsequent to the first century, that is, it must have appeared at least as early as the time at which tradition tells us John died.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE AUTHOR.

**Early Origin  
of our Gospel.**

If in the preceding chapters our facts are sure and our reasoning good, the gospel is shown to have been in circulation at a time very close to what tradition assigns as the date of the death of John. We have seen it to be improbable, if not impossible, that a forgery could have gained currency at so early a date ; that Gnostics would not have received a book which ran counter to their theories if its apostolicity had not been known, and that the orthodox would not have accepted one which their opponents used unless it were believed genuine. The argument thus far, then, implies the authorship of John, but only upon the supposition that

**John's Residence  
at Ephesus**

John lived till near the close of the first century, and with the implication that his home was in Ephesus. Since both these facts have "for dogmatic reasons" been denied, it will be necessary to see what the evidence is for (1) John's survival, (2) in Ephesus, (3) till near the beginning of the second century. We are to bear in mind that the reason for denying the Ephesian residence of John is that it

would be impossible to account for the recognized currency of a gospel composed by him in proconsular Asia so early as has been proved on

grounds other than its genuineness if John lived in Ephesus. People would at once have declared it spurious, or, at least, would have questioned its genuineness, a thing of which we have no trace till we meet the Alogi, whose contention was *at once* challenged and afterwards ridiculed.

**Evidence of Irenæus, fl. 174-189 A.D.** Now Irenæus (*Against Heresies*, iii, 3, 4), in speaking of the preservation of ecclesiastical tradition as given by the apostles, has the following: "The church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently *until the times of Trajan [98-117 A.D.]*, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles." In the same chapter he relates that "John, the disciple of the Lord, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, 'Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.'" And this story is given on the authority of Polycarp. So in the same work, iii, 1, 1, Irenæus says, "Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia." Quotations from Irenæus to this purport might be multiplied almost indefinitely.

**Apollonius, c. 200 A.D.** According to Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, v, 18), Apollonius relates that "a dead man was raised by the divine power, through the same John [as wrote the Apocalypse] at Ephesus."

**Polycrates, c. 190 A.D.** The same writer tells us (*Hist. Eccl.*, v, 24) that Polycrates of Ephesus wrote in a letter to Victor of Rome that "John, who rested on the bosom of the Lord . . . , is buried in

Ephesus," and we may naturally deduce from this that John lived in Ephesus.

Clement of Alexandria, fl. 190-203 A.D. Clement of Alexandria, in chapter forty-two of his *Salvation of the Rich Man*, implies the residence of the apostle John at Ephesus, using such expressions as, "For when, on the tyrant's death, he [John] returned to Ephesus from the isle of Patmos," "and he set out for Ephesus," showing knowledge of a tradition that the city of Diana was the home of the apostle.

Justin Martyr, †166 A.D. Justin Martyr, who held in *Ephesus* a discussion with Trypho, a Jew, says in the course of the debate, "A man among us, one of the apostles of Christ, has prophesied in the Revelation which was given to him." The most natural interpretation of this passage is that the words "among us" mark the *place* as Ephesus.

Certainly it is John the Apostle who is referred to here, for we know that the Apocalypse was generally attributed to him by the early church, as witness the reference in Irenæus (*Against Heresies*, v, 30, 1), "That number [666] being found in all accurate copies [of the Apocalypse], and those men who saw John face to face bearing testimony to it. . . ."

Polycarp, 70-155 A.D. The Martyr Polycarp bears testimony to the presence of John in Asia Minor. Irenæus refers to this (see Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v, 24) when he writes to Florinus, "And I could still show thee the place where he sat when he taught, and gave an account of his relations with John and with the others who had seen the Lord." So later, when Polycarp

visited Rome he had a discussion with the Roman bishop Anicetus concerning the observation of the Christian pass-over on 14th Nisan, and Polycarp refused to give way, "seeing that he had always observed it *with John the disciple of the Lord*, and the rest of the disciples, with whom he associated" (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v, 24). The weight of this testimony seems the greater if we remember that Polycarp was bishop of the church at Smyrna, only forty miles away from Ephesus.

**Ignatius,** Ignatius, thought to have been a disciple of John, may refer to this when in  
**30?-108 A.D.** his letter to the *Ephesians* (Chap. xi), he writes of "the Christians who *have always had intercourse* with the apostles . . . , with Paul, *and John*, and Timothy." This last piece of evidence may have to be qualified, as the words "with Paul, and John, etc.," belong to the longer recension of the Ignatian epistles.

**Further Indications.** Confirmatory evidence of John's residence in Asia Minor is found in his well-known solicitude for the churches there as shown in the messages to the seven churches. The legends which grew up in after-years also imply an Ephesian residence, notably that of the young men of Ephesus who sold their goods and gave away the proceeds, under John's direction. They then regretted their action, when John told them to gather sticks and stones, which he then turned into gold and gems, reproaching the young men for their apostasy. They soon repented, when the gold and precious stones reverted to their original form.

In fact, whatever mention we have of John invariably finds its easiest and most natural interpretation on the sup-

position that he lived in Ephesus. Any other explanation plunges us at once into difficulties.

**Date of John's Death.** The evidence as to the death of John agrees in placing it near the close of the first century. Jerome says that he died sixty-eight years after the Passion, *i. e.*, about 100 A.D. Irenæus says that he lived till Trajan's accession (98 A.D.), and Suidas makes him live to the age of 120. The only way to get rid of this testimony is to deny it absolutely or to "explain it away." We see no reason for either process, and so prefer to accept the evidence.

**John the Author.** We have therefore brought the apostle John and the gospel of John into close re-

lationship. Is there any direct testimony connecting him with the gospel which goes by his name? Undoubtedly there is. And here again we fall back on Irenæus, who is, in all matters concerning the external testimony for the fourth gospel, the mark between flood and ebb. We have already quoted in this

**Asserted by Irenæus, fl. 174-189 A.D.** chapter one passage in which this father states that John wrote a gospel while in Asia. Another passage is found in the same work, *Against Heresies*, iii, 11, 8, "For that [gospel] according to John relates [Christ's] original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'" We shall not adduce the testimony of fathers later than Irenæus, as a glance at the indices of good editions of their works will show how numerous are the ascriptions of our gospel to John from Irenæus on.

**Theophilus,** our readers to the third chapter of this book, where we have cited a quotation by **Theophilus of Antioch** in his *To Autolycus*, "And hence the holy writings teach us, and all the spirit-bearing men, one of whom, John, says, 'In the beginning,' etc."

**Muratorian Fragment, date?** The Muratorian fragment, the date of which, as we have seen, has been usually put about 170 A.D., is explicit in its statement: "The fourth gospel is that of John, one of the disciples." The question as to the date of this fragment may have to be reexamined, but there is no weighty reason to militate against the accepted date.

**The Title.** Another piece of evidence is found in the title of our gospel "According to John." This title is evidently of very ancient origin, for it is found in every Greek manuscript and version. It is uniform with the titles of the other gospels, and points to the time when the "Evangelical Instrument" was first put into canonical use. It expresses the sense of the church at some time prior to Justin Martyr, who uses the expression, "the memoirs which are called gospels," *i. e.*, some time prior at least to 145 A.D., perhaps prior to 138.

**Irenæus, Against Heresies, i, 8, 5,** says that the Valentinians c. 170. "teach that John, the disciple of the Lord, indicated the first Ogdoad, expressing themselves in these words: 'John, the disciple of the Lord, wishing to set forth the origin of all things,' etc."

Heracleon, who wrote the first commentary on our gospel, certainly attributed it to John, as Origen's refutation

of his exegesis undoubtedly implies, and Ptolemæus quoted the gospel with the introduction, “The apostle declares.” But the fourth gospel was attributed to no other of the apostles than John.

The foregoing are the explicit, external witnesses to the Johannean authorship of our gospel. Other implicit testimony is available, but on that given above we are content to rest our case, yet it must be acknowledged that the earliest explicit ascription of the gospel to John is late in the second century.

Having now examined the witnesses outside the gospel itself, it behooves us to see whether the indications which we find within the gospel agree with and support what is unmistakably the tenor of the external testimony.

## CHAPTER IX.

### INTERNAL EVIDENCE TO THE DATE.

**Antiquity of Fourth Gospel.** We have seen that our witnesses require an early date for the fourth gospel. Also that Irenæus states that it was composed *after* the Synoptic gospels. We have passed in review the tradition of the church, uniform and consonant, to the effect that John lived his last years, in Ephesus, to a great age. Now if that be the case, we may look for traces of these things in the gospel itself, if it be written by John.

**Internal Indications.** If the gospel were not composed at the close of the first century, let us suppose a date about 140 A.D. for its composition. There were then, as burning questions, several subjects of debate on which a writer of that period could hardly have refrained from touching. These were, first, the episcopate, so strongly brought out in the Ignatian epistles, and for which John xx. 22, 23 is an inadequate basis. Second, the Gnostic theory of emanations: the Gnostics did not see that the prologue to the gospel met this. As Bishop Lightfoot says: "It is only by abstruse reasoning that we reach this." Third, the Paschal controversy. Lightfoot's remark on this is as follows: "Any adventurer who dared to forge a whole gospel would not be deterred by any scruple from setting the

controversy at rest with a few strokes of his pen.” Now it is significant that our gospel is silent as to these points, or, if not silent, whatever it has to say on them is indirect, inferential, has to be *deduced* by a process of ratiocination. The fact that the gospel so early went under John’s name is an indication that it was first published with his imprimatur. If he did not write it, then it was forged. But a forger could hardly have resisted the temptation to decide these questions under cover of apostolic authority. That nothing of this appears in the gospel is, so far, an indication of its great age. Its *omissions* mark its antiquity.

Again, Irenæus (*Against Heresies*, iii, 11, Refutes Cerinthus, 1) tells us that John aimed by his gospel to refute Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans who taught that God the Father and God the Creator were two, the latter inferior to the former. Now Cerinthus was

probably an Alexandrian proselyte, who but not, Explicitly, later had gotten hold of the “Alexandrian Gnosticism. type of Logos doctrine.” A cursory reading of the prologue shows how completely John has met this form of heresy by identifying the Logos and God.

And the story of John’s meeting Cerinthus at the bath indicates (1) the abhorrence of John for that heretic; (2) the existence of both at the same time in Ephesus, and (3) the probability that John would combat the form of error which Cerinthus was preaching. But the teaching of John does not, as before said, explicitly deal with the Gnostic emanations, therefore the type of Gnosticism which it contests is incipient, not developed. How well all this fits in with the hypothesis of an early date!

**Early Date Suggested by Type of its Teaching,**

While the fourth gospel is declared to have been written subsequently to the synoptics, and to this declaration all criticism gives assent, it must be affirmed that it could not have been very long after them. For it still moves, professedly and evidentially, in the apostolic circle. There is in John not an iota of the silly legendary stuff which so abounds in the Apocryphal gospels. And when we note in the fragment of the Peter gospel, which may date as early as 130 A.D., evident traces of the legendary and absurd, and compare the sober realm in which our gospel lives, containing as it does not a single event which might not equally well, so far as consonance

**and Miracles.** of ideas and of character goes, be found in the three synoptic gospels, we see at once how this proclaims a high antiquity for the John gospel. Its agreement with the synoptic gospels and differences from the Apocryphal gospels, in the type of its teachings and particularly of its miracles, evinces a similarity in origin (and, therefore, of date) with the former, and a disparity with the latter.

**Its Literary Style.**

Another testimony to the gospel's great age is the vigor and freshness of its style.

The apostolic and subapostolic literature is feeble in style and is pietistic, has not an independent ring. One of the writers on our topic has said that we should have to come down to the fourth century before we could find a man able to construct the discourses of John. If there had been in the second century a man capable of such writing, he could not have been lost. "No man

could have written thus unless he were consciously the reporter of one immeasurably his superior."

The book claims to be written by an eyewitness of the facts related. We have not here to bring  
**By an Eyewitness.** forward the proofs in the gospel that this claim is true. They belong in a little lower place in our array of evidence. If the events described, the discourses retold, were seen and heard by an eyewitness, then, in truth, the date of the book is in the first century. And to this conclusion all the indications we have mentioned point, and, indeed, seem to admit no other.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE AUTHOR. INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

The Author There are certain indications, evidently not inserted with the purpose of guiding to any conclusion, indications which, like the flashing of a Jew. an eye, are involuntary, and which lead us to conclude that the author was A JEW. This is inferred from the style of the language. The Greek is well known as a language especially rich in (1) inflections, (2) in synonyms and (3) in connecting and relative particles. It is, therefore, especially favorable to the formation of sonorous periods. The Hebrew is the reverse of this, except in the matter of synonyms of words other than conjunctions. Any scholar familiar with both Greek and Hebrew will see at once in the fourth gospel the manner of one accustomed to *think* in the Hebrew (or Aramaic) tongue. The rounded Greek period is absent. There is present instead the Hebrew parallelism. In place of the richness of diction, which a Greek seeks to display by using synonyms, there is a repetition of the same word in succeeding clauses. And this Hebrew habit of thought is especially seen in the paucity of the conjunctions used. Unfortunately this feature is somewhat obscured in our English translation, inasmuch as the same word is rendered differently. Thus

the same word is translated “and,” “but,” “then,” “moreover,” etc. Now where a native Greek would have used different particles to indicate the relations of coördination and opposition, the author of our gospel often makes use of one word to express these different relations. Thus (John v. 43, 44): “I am come in my Father’s name, *and* [yet] ye receive me not: . . . . How can ye believe which receive glory one of another, *and* [yet] the glory that [cometh] from the only God ye seek not.” Here although the relation is clearly adversative, the author uses the coördinate “and,” the same which he employs in other sentences to coördinate. This fact receives its only adequate explanation when we remember that the Hebrew word means both “but” or “and yet,” and “and.” Not less indicative of the Jewish mode of thought is the doubling of the “amen” (twenty-five times in the gospel) at the beginning of declaration. This is peculiar to the fourth gospel and goes back to the Hebrew principle of doubling a word to produce emphasis.

On these stylistic peculiarities so eminent an authority as Bishop Lightfoot has said (*Expositor*, 1890, i, 17): “There is hardly a sentence which might not be translated, literally into Hebrew or Aramaic, without any violence to the language or the sense.”

**And Explanations  
of Names.**

Corroborating this evidence of the style of the language is the interpretation of individual words given here and there in the gospel. Such words as Cephas, Messias, Golgotha, Thomas, Rabboni, Gabbatha, are explained, their meaning given. Of course this does not of itself imply an intimate knowledge of Aramaic, but, added to the Jewish

cast of thought mentioned above, is significant. Especially interesting in this connection are the words "Iscariot" and "Simon son of Joannes." The synoptic gospels refer the name "Iscariot" to Judas alone, but the fourth gospel applies it not only to Judas but to his father. This shows that the appellation was not a proper name, but belonged to the place of origin or of residence. It means "the man of Kerioth," and so could be applied not only to Judas but to his father. So, too, the oldest manuscripts give us not "Simon son of Jona" (with the synoptics), but "Simon son of Joannes," Joannes being the equivalent of Johanan or John, of which Jona or Jonas was the contract form. In other words, the fourth gospel incidentally explains, makes clear, what we should not have understood, or might have misunderstood, in the synoptics, that the name of Simon Peter's father was not Jonah (signifying "a dove"), but John (signifying "the grace of God").

**The Author a Palestinian Jew.** An equally clear token of Jewish origin is found in the fact that the author of the gospel quoted not only the Greek version of the Old Testament, but the Hebrew itself, even reintroducing difficulties which the Septuagint had tried

**He uses the Hebrew Bible.** to avoid. This enables us still further to narrow our circle, and to declare that the author was not only a Jew, but a

Palestinian Jew. Three passages particularly have been adduced: St. John xix. 37 (Zech. xii. 10), "They shall look on him whom they pierced" (Greek: "They shall gaze on me because they insulted"); St. John xii. 40 (Isa. vi. 10), "Because that Esaias said again, he hath

blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart" (The Septuagint has the sentence in a passive form); and St. John xiii. 18 (Ps. xli. 9), "He . . . hath lifted up his heel against me (Greek: "He . . . hath multiplied tripping with the heel"). In the first of these cases it has been shown that possibly the author of our gospel was dependent on a translation of the Hebrew other than the Septuagint. But in other cases the Johannine rendering stands alone, and no other version can be found on which it could depend. We are therefore driven to the conclusion that the author translated directly from the Hebrew. This makes our gospel impossible of Gentile authorship. The only person other than John to whom it was attributed in early times was Cerinthus, a proselyte, an Alexandrian proselyte, who would therefore have employed the Septuagint and not the Hebrew.

**Corroborative Evidence.** This conclusion is necessitated when we find in the gospel fullness of detail (*a*) concerning the Messianic hopes of the Jews; (*b*) concerning the mutual relations of Jewish sects, and concerning the prejudices, beliefs and customs of each; and (*c*) concerning the contemporary history of the Jewish hierarchy and Herodian sovereignty.

**The Messianic Idea.** We have already had occasion to note that Justin Martyr follows our gospel in his emphasis on the Logos as incarnated.

About the presentation of the character of the Logos is hung the drapery of the Messianic person. Throughout the Logos as the Messiah is the topic of discourse and narrative, ruling the motive and furnishing the theme. The agreement of the character of Jesus with the prophetic

cies and expectations concerning the Coming One are constantly in the foreground. In connection with the development of this idea our author presents certain phases which show that he was intimately acquainted with the expectations of the Palestinians concerning the

The Giving Anointed One. And these touches are of Manna. merely incidental, not studied. They need

an acquaintance with Talmudic exegesis and rabbinic gloss to make them intelligible. For instance, in John vi. 31 is the statement put to Jesus evidently as a test of his Messianic claims, "Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness," and we note that Jesus appears to understand the statement as referring to himself as he goes on to declare that he is the "bread . . . which cometh down from heaven." Here the author gives us a glimpse which we get nowhere else in the New Testament of the expectation of the rabbis, a tradition current among the people and found in rabbinical writings, that Messias would perform a miracle analogous to the giving of the manna. So after the feeding of the five thousand the people say (John vi. 14): "This is of a truth that prophet that should come." But the prophet, as we shall see, was to be like Moses, who fed the Israelites in the wilderness on manna. The miracle was so like the early miraculous feeding of the fugitives from Egypt as to suggest the possibility that the worker of the wonder was the "prophet" foretold. The explanation is not given by the author, and it is only by delving among the rolls of rabbinical parchment that we get the elucidation which opens up so clearly the reference in the passage to the expectations concerning the prophet.

We have four allusions in John to "The Prophet." "the prophet," going back on Deut. xviii. 15, and if we compare the passages where this phrase occurs (John i. 21-25, vi. 14, vii. 40) we shall see that the Jews looked on "the prophet" as a different person from "the Christ." Christians identified the prophet with the Christ, so that the idea here presented is a contemporary Jewish idea, not a later Christian conception.

**His Knowledge of the Sects,** We notice next the minute and exact understanding which the author had of the interrelations of the sects of the Jews. The synoptists use the phrase, "The Pharisees and Sadducees" over against "the chief priests and the Pharisees" of the fourth gospel. One not intimately acquainted with the situation of affairs at the time spoken of would not know that at that period the chief priests were of the sect of the Sadducees. We know now that the latter were comparatively few in number, and that, though they were in the chief places, they had yet to cater to the desires of the Pharisees. The consequence is that in John, with but one exception, the Pharisees lead in the persecution of Jesus, the chief priests simply acting as their executive. The one exception is notable. It is when the chief priests, without taking their cue from the Pharisees, propose to put Lazarus to death. On this Bishop Lightfoot (whom we follow here) remarks (*Expositor*, 1890, i, 87): "This (the matter of Lazarus' restoration to life) was essentially a Sadducees' question. It was necessary that a living witness to the great truth: [the resurrection from the dead],

**of the Sadducees,**

which the high-priestly party denied, should be got rid of at all hazards." And we are to note how such action tallies with that recorded in the Acts when Paul so astutely arrays the Pharisees, the numerically greater party, on his side by introducing the question of the resurrection. And this intimate acquaintance with the sects is made more evident by a graphic touch which becomes striking only on comparison with a passage in Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, ii, viii, 14). We find there that one characteristic of this ruling sect was their brusque rudeness. Notice, then, in the light of what we have seen, how (John xi. 49) Caiaphas, the high priest, coarsely and unceremoniously remarks to the Pharisees, "Ye know nothing at all." Evidently only one who was thoroughly conversant with the Sadduceic manners would have painted in this eminently characteristic remark. Bishop Lightfoot remarks (*Expositor*, 1890, i, 87) that the key which unlocks the meaning of these various incidents is not given by the author—to him they were so familiar that it does not occur but that others will understand them—but by Josephus or the rabbis.

Also in matters other than those relating to sectarian differences the author is thoroughly informed. He knows the disharmony of feeling existing between the Jews and the Samaritans. He lets us know that under the Romans the Jews had not the power of capital punishment, and that while blasphemy under the Jewish law was a capital offense the Jews were powerless to inflict the penalty and must needs trump up another charge to secure the death

and of  
Jewish Social  
and Political  
Life,

and of  
History.

of Jesus. All the details of life among the Jews before the fall of Jerusalem are matters upon which he is thoroughly and accurately informed.

**Historical Accuracy.** While the evangelist has been proved exact in the statements he has made concerning the

matters summed up above, his historical statements will be found equally trustworthy. We have a point of time given in the second chapter (vss. 19, 20) which shows an exact knowledge to be gained, in all like-

**Herod's Temple.** lihood, only by one on the spot at the time, by one who knew the history of the temple then building. “*Forty and six years,*” say the Jews,

“has this temple been building, and wilt thou raise it again in three days?” It is discoverable by comparing several passages in Josephus that Herod’s temple was commenced about B.C. 18. Add forty-six years to this date and we are brought down to A.D. 28, 29. This calculation seems an easy one, but Bishop Lightfoot calls attention to the fact that the calculation is the result of a complicated exercise of historical criticism. Another equally complicated calculation is required to fix the dates of our Lord. It requires a comparison of dates dependent on both Luke and John, neither alone being sufficient. But these two independent lines of research bring us to the

**Lightfoot on the Temple.** same date, A.D. 28, 29. The bearing of this let us get from Bishop Lightfoot’s own words (*Expositor*, 1890, i, 91, 92): “Let us suppose

the gospel to have been written in the middle of the second century, and ask ourselves what strong improbabilities the hypothesis involves. The writer must have first made himself acquainted with a number of facts

connected with the temple of Herod. He must not only have known that the temple was commenced in a particular year, but also that it was incomplete at the time of our Lord's ministry. So far as we know he could have got these facts only from Josephus. Even Josephus however does not state the actual date of the commencement of the temple. It requires some patient research to arrive at this date by a comparison of several passages. We have therefore to suppose, first, that the forger of the fourth gospel went through an elaborate critical investigation for the sake of ascertaining the date. But, secondly, he must have made himself acquainted with the chronology of the gospel history. At all events, he must have ascertained the date of the commencement of our Lord's ministry. The most favorable supposition is, that he had before him the gospel of St. Luke, though he nowhere else betrays the slightest acquaintance with the gospel. Here he would find the date he wanted, reckoned by the years of the Roman governors. Thirdly, after arriving at these two results by separate processes, he must combine them; thus connecting the chronology of the Jewish kings with the chronology of the Roman emperors, the chronology of the temple erections with the chronology of our Lord's life.

"When he has taken all these pains, and worked up the subject so elaborately, he drops in the notice which has given him so much trouble in an incidental and inobtrusive way. It has no bearing on his history; it does not subserve the purpose of his theology. It leads to nothing, proves nothing. Certainly the art of concealing art was never exercised in a more masterly way than here. And

yet this was an age which perpetrated the most crude and bungling forgeries, and is denounced by modern criticism for its utter incapacity of criticism.” To this we add, how naturally such a sentence would occur to a Palestinian Jew who had no need of such elaborate calculations and delicate combinations to give him the date—to one who knew the fact by residence on the spot, and who heard the words fall from the lips of the speakers!

The Gospel's Topographical Accuracy, granted by Critics. Yet more decisive of the nativity of the author of the gospel are the topographical details of the scenes of Christ's ministry. The investigations made by Dr. Robinson and others, and those carried on under the care of the Palestine Exploration Fund, have furnished many proofs of the exactness of our author's knowledge of the geography of the Holy Land. It is interesting to note what a change has come over the spirit of criticism with respect to the fidelity of the writer of the fourth gospel to truth in matters of geography. In the days of Baur, topographical inaccuracies innumerable were pointed out. The claim was made that on the score of errors in the names and location of places alone it was impossible that the author could ever have visited Palestine. Such a claim is now given up. Dr. Schürer says on this, “The geographical errors and ignorance of things Jewish have shrunk to a mere minimum. And the opposition no longer lays stress on them.” The opposition long dwelt on the fact that the author named places not elsewhere named in Scripture. But places bearing similar names are now found in the localities indicated by Specifications.

the evangelist, and this is strong confirmatory evidence when taken in connection with the well-known persistence of local names in the Arabic language. The names which gave so much trouble to the critical school years ago—such names as *Cana of Galilee*, *Bethany beyond Jordan*, *Ephraim near the wilderness*, *Aenon near to Salim*, *Sychar*—are now conceded to present not difficulties but evidences of the writer's minute knowledge of the country. Besides these names, showing exact acquaintance with the country at large, the description of places in and about Jerusalem is no less suggestive. Bethesda, Siloam, the brook Kidron, Golgotha with its garden, the judgment seat called “The Pavement” or “Gabbatha,” the treasury, Solomon's Porch, and other places are well known to him. So, too, there are verifications of his otherwise well-attested knowledge in the notes we find as to distances—for instance, Bethany fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem. But we are not even yet done with objections, for Mr. Cross (*Westminster Review*, August, 1890, and *Critical Review*, February, 1891) thinks that such knowledge as the author displays might have been gained from geographies or geographical notices extant when he wrote. Dr. Sanday has effectually disposed of this argument in the *Expositor* for March, 1892, in a discussion too long to be quoted here. Suffice it to say that he there concludes that the author was either a Palestinian Jew or one who had made a long sojourn in the country. Other considerations are examined which show the former of these conclusions almost, if not quite, binding.

To use Dr. Sanday's words (*Expositor*, April, 1892): “The author of the fourth gospel shows his Jewish origin

not only by his knowledge of Palestinian topography, by  
the cast of his style, by his interpretation  
**Dr. Sanday's Conclusion** of Jewish names, . . . . by the frequency  
of his quotations from the Old Testament,  
and by the probability that in some of them he has  
been influenced by his acquaintance either with the origi-  
nal text or with the current Aramaic paraphrases—but that  
more than this, his mind is really steeped in the Old Tes-  
tament, and that his leading ideas stand as much in direct-  
line with the Old Testament as those of St. Paul and St.  
Peter.” And Dr. Sanday quotes from a careful investi-  
gator, Thoma, a passage which concedes all that has been  
claimed thus far, a passage which we can do no better

**and Thoma's.** than to quote as Dr. Sanday has given it,

expressing so clearly in English the Ger-  
man's conclusion: “This friendliness towards the Gentiles  
which the evangelist shares with the apostle [of the Gen-  
tiles] serves as little as his dislike of the Jews to prove his  
Gentile origin. On the contrary, his whole culture, the  
circle of ideas in which he is at home, the language which  
is familiar to him, point to a Jewish or Jewish-Christian  
origin. True, the Samaritan Justin has also a very good  
knowledge of Scripture. But the way in which he applies  
it shows that this knowledge has been acquired for learned  
and literary use in polemics and apologetics; it is rather  
an importation from without of foreign material which he  
has built into his walls. With the evangelist, on the other  
hand, one sees that he has sucked in a Jewish way of  
thinking with his mother's milk, that from a child he has  
been fed upon the living bread of the Word of God, that  
from his youth up he has read the Holy Scriptures and

steeped himself in their ideas, figures of speech, and words of expression, so that the reminiscences of them come out as if they were something of his own, rather an unconscious and spontaneous manner of thinking and speaking than as quotation and interpretation.

“Along with this he is acquainted with Jewish customs and usages, and that such as are not to be got from the Old Testament, or such as might impress themselves vividly and familiarly upon a spectator from observing the religious ceremonies of an alien society. He alludes impartially and with no great effort to such Jewish traditions and ideas as would only be possible to one who had himself been accustomed to move amongst Jews; indeed this perhaps is the reason which makes him forget here and there to put in explanations which, to a non-Jewish reader, would be quite indispensable to make him understand what was said (see John vii. 37f., 22f., xviii. 32, xix. 31; contrasted with xix. 41). On the other hand, his explanatory notes on the manners and customs of the Jews may be accounted for by reference to Gentile readers on whom the author had to reckon, and probably did immediately reckon.

“But what tells more especially for Jewish origin is the knowledge of Hebrew which the author displays. This knowledge is considerably greater than Justin’s, who undertakes to give the meaning of a name here and there, badly enough; it is better than Philo’s, who may perhaps have taken his interpretations from an *Onomasticon*. Because from the current version, to which both the Jewish and the Christian philosopher keep as a rule, there are found in the gospel considerable divergences which appear

to rest not upon a special improved translation of the Old Testament Scriptures, but upon a knowledge of the Hebrew text. What most directly points to a knowledge of Hebrew is the fact that the author not only is able to give a meaning and interpretation to names which he finds to his hand, or else (as in the case of Nathaniel) to express themselves by synonyms, but he even forms Aramaic words of his own, like Bethesda."

If all the indications mentioned point to the Jewish origin of the writer of our gospel, they also, with other indices,

suggest that he was also an eyewitness.

**The Author Proved an Eyewitness,** These indices are found in graphic and minute details relating to character, and to the times and theatres of events, and in details of number. Of course we cannot lay weight here on the claim of the writer to be an eyewitness—any forger might have asserted such a claim. But we are concerned with the casual pointers, the unmistakably undesigned and naturally inserted evidence that the writer had before him as he wrote a mental picture based not on the imagination but on experience. We find, for instance, that the *personæ dramatis* are vividly before him. Thus there occurs

**by his Character Sketches,** sentence upon sentence opening with, "The Scribes and Pharisees say unto him," "Jesus answered and said,"

"The Jews say unto him," "The officers answered"—clearly the actors in the scene were in a lively sense in the writer's mind's eye. Not less drawn from the life are the characters presented. Pilate, indifferent to truth as an abstraction and cynically scornful; Nathaniel, the true Israelite, in whom there was no guile; Peter, impulsive,

zealous, eager, yet falling short of his professions; Thomas, who is no more than mentioned in the synoptics, but whose character is sketched in bold outline in the fourth gospel—Thomas, who was called Didymus, the twin, whose presence and absence with the other disciples with the consequences thereof to himself are so clearly noted; Nicodemus, known as a Pharisee, one of the rulers of the Jews, yet timid and irresolute; all these are portraits which by their circumstantiality and their directness manifest the closest familiarity with the character traits of their originals.

Especially interesting in this connection is the *development* of the difference in character of Martha and Mary. Bishop Lightfoot remarks that Luke draws the picture of these two women in a definite incident and in bold contrast. Though in John the same difference in disposition appears, it is rather by the patient sketching of minute details in the course of a continuous narrative that we are led to apprehend the contrast in the natures of the two sisters.

If acquaintance with the persons presented is manifested by the liveliness of

and by Notes of Time, the portrayal, not less does the minuteness with which points of time are noted indicate the personal presence of the author. These relate (1) to the hour of the day: the tenth hour (i. 40), the sixth hour (iv. 6), the seventh hour (iv. 52), the sixth hour (xix. 14); (2) to the period of the day: it was night (xiii. 30), in the morning while it was yet dark (xx. 1), the evening (vi. 16, xx. 19); (3) to periods of time: eight days (xx. 11), the Morrow (i. 29, 43), again on the Morrow (i. 35), the third day (ii. 1), six days before the passover (xii. 1).

Further corroboration is found in the notes of Place, of the place of events: Thus John baptized at Bethany and Aenon (the synoptics tell us only that John baptized "about Jordan," "in Jordan," etc.); the nobleman's son was sick at Capernaum while Jesus was at Cana (iv. 46); he spent a portion of time in a city called Ephraim (xi. 54); Christ preached or spoke in Solomon's Porch (x. 23); in a gathering at Capernaum (vi. 59); in the treasury (vii. 20); the marriage was in Cana of Galilee (ii. 1).

Just as significant are the memoranda of Number, numbers in the gospel: There were two disciples of John (i. 35), six waterpots (ii. 6), five loaves and two fishes (vi. 9), twenty-five furlongs (vi. 19), four soldiers (xix. 23), two hundred cubits (xxi. 8), one hundred and fifty-three fishes (xxi. 11).

We may not pass over what is especially difficult to summarize, that is the recollection and setting forth of the details which have no bearing on the purpose of the book, but which have the appearance of flowing spontaneously from the memory of the narrator. Let us take (as an example of this only, for the gospel is so replete with this kind of detail that we may not take space to exhaust it), the visit of the two disciples to the tomb. We notice that Mary Magdalene came *running* with the news to Peter and the anonymous disciple whom Jesus loved. These two go toward the tomb, but their pace is a run, and (at first, apparently) they keep on equal terms, though at the end "the other disciple" outruns Peter and comes first to the tomb, and *stoops* and *looks* in, but does

not enter. Then Peter arrives and *enters* the tomb, and we have immediately a description of the contents *and their position*. Peter is followed by the other disciple, who comes, sees and believes, after which each goes to *his own home*. There are countless other details of this character which reveal the eyewitness, e.g., the loaves which *a boy* had were *barley* loaves (vi. 9); when Jesus was entertained at Bethany, Martha *served*, Lazarus *sat at meat*, Mary *anointed his feet*, and "*the house was filled with the odour of ointment*" (xii. 2, 3); the remarks which the bystanders make with reference to the cured blind man are noted (ix. 9).

**Force of this Argument.** Long as we have dwelt on this phase of

the narrative of the last gospel, we have only hinted at the many circumstances which point to an eyewitness as its author. And the force of the argument lies not merely nor chiefly in the details themselves nor in their number, but in the fact that they have all the appearance of being spontaneous. They are not lugged in to give verisimilitude to the story, they are a part of the story, take their places so naturally as to preclude a conscious effort to recall them, a striving to make a complete narrative. Many things which would be much clearer, if explained, receive no explication, simply because the writer did not perceive, so intimate was he with them, that they needed explanation. And yet he does not hesitate to elucidate *when it occurs to him* that elucidation is necessary. Instances of this are seen in the interpretation of Hebrew names, in the reason for the setting of the waterpots at the marriage, etc., etc.

An extension of the same line of reasoning as that in

which we have just indulged may be used to narrow still further the circle of possible authorship.

**The Author  
an Apostle** The writer was not only a Jew, a Palestine Jew, an eyewitness ; he must have been an apostle. The character of many of the scenes described, and so described as to warrant the assumption that the writer was present, could have been known only to an apostle. To this the objection is made that such information as the author gives might conceivably be at second hand. There is the possibility of this, but the tests we have applied above, when employed here, preclude such an explanation. The scale is so large and the minutiae so clearly given as to necessitate the conclusion that the sum of knowledge was gained by experience and observation, not by hearsay. Of course, the claim we

**Proved by His  
Knowledge of  
the Disciples'  
Acts, Thoughts  
and Feelings,** make, rests upon no one event or set of events. It is that all through the gospel the events in which the disciples were particularly concerned, the discourses directed to them, the hopes and aspirations and fears which arose in their breasts, are known to him. He is acquainted with their opinions at crises in the life of Christ ; he remembers that they murmured at the Saviour's hard sayings (vi. 60, 61), that they were surprised that he should talk with a woman (iv. 27), that they feared at the sight of Jesus walking on the sea (vi. 19), that at later times they recalled prophecies concerning him which had been fulfilled (ii. 17, xii. 16), and that they were mystified by the Master's sayings (vi. 60, xiii. 22, 28). He rehearses their discussions and recounts their sayings ; he knows their places of resort and tells us of

mistaken notions entertained by them and afterward set right. In short, he appears to have lived among them an intimate and an associate, a sharer in their joys, a participant in their sorrows, partaking of their hopes, receiving instruction with them, reverencing their Master and remaining with him in trial and in death, and meeting him after his resurrection.

Contributing fully as much as the preceding to the conclusion that the author was an apostle is and of the Mind of Jesus. his insight into the workings of our Lord's mind. He knows the troubled spirit of the Master (xi. 33, xiii. 21), the reasons for his actions (ii. 24, v. 6, vi. 15, vii. 1), the sources of his questioning and discourses (vi. 6, 61, 64, xiii. 1, 3, 11). As Bishop Westcott has said (*Commentary*, p. xxi): "He speaks as one to whom the mind of the Lord was laid open." Surely to no one outside the little band of intimates was possible so confidential association with the Master as the foregoing implies.

But if what precedes implies an apostle as the author, we are shut up to the apostle John as the only apostle to whom the authorship of the fourth gospel That Apostle was John, was possible. Now we find in the epilogue of the gospel the declaration that the disciple who "bore witness" of the things told in that gospel, or, in other words, who wrote it, was the disciple of whom Jesus said: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" and that he was the disciple "whom Jesus loved." (An incidental confirmation of this is found in the scene at the institution of the

**the Disciple**  
**"Whom Jesus**  
**Loved."**

Lord's Supper. After the Saviour had declared that one of the disciples was to betray him, Peter signaled the disciple "whom Jesus loved" to ask who the traitor was.

**Confirmation.** This he did, and Christ evidently answered *him alone*, for the disciples did not understand what the Lord meant when he said to Judas: "That thou doest, do quickly." But evidently that disciple understood, as we learn from the fact that his is the only narrative of the incident, the synoptists knowing nothing of the application of Jesus' remark to Judas. And one thing more adds probability to this identification. Our Saviour on the cross committed his mother to the care of this same disciple. This does not appear in the record of the other evangelists. It would be strange if such a story was invented in the second century, or, supposing it to be true, were rediscovered. But how natural that the disciple himself should remember it, or rather, how unlikely that he should not!) From the synoptics we learn that the inner circle of disciples, those who were in a special sense near to Jesus, consisted of Peter, James and John. Of these we know that James suffered martyrdom in the early days of the church, that Peter also suffered death probably in A.D. 66 or 67, and all indications point to a somewhat later date for our gospel. So that by a process of elimination, only John is left as the possible author of the book which goes by his name.

**The Baptist's Appellative Omitted.** Are there any indications in the gospel itself that our supposition is true? Undoubtedly there are. In the first place the evangelist John is never named in the fourth gospel. Once, indeed, we have mention of the "sons of

Zebedee," but the only other references to John, if the gospel contains any, can be found only in the phrase, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." An examination of the synoptics will show that the sons of Zebedee are always named in the front rank of the apostles, they occupy a prominent position among the apostles. Unless we identify this especially favored disciple of our gospel with John, we have the anomaly, most difficult of explanation, that so central a figure as one of the favored three does not figure at all in the last of the gospels. Secondly, we notice that the evangelist is very exact in defining names in his gospel. Simon Peter has either his full name or the new name Peter. Thomas is nearly always called Didymus, contrary to the custom of the synoptists. The two Judases are carefully distinguished. Caiaphas is named as the high priest. But when we come to John the Baptist, whom the synoptists always distinguished carefully from John, the Lord's disciple, we find him spoken of simply as John. On this, Bishop Westcott remarks (*Commentary*, p. xxii): "If the writer of the gospel were himself the other John of the gospel history, it is perfectly natural that he should think of the Baptist, apart from himself, as John only." Godet offers another explanation (not so good, we think) of this omission to designate the forerunner as "the Baptist," viz., that it is the omission of one who knew the son of Zacharias "*before* history attached that epithet to his name, which, becoming technical, became at a later period inseparable from it."

Bearing in mind the process of elimination in the preceding lines, we may find further corroboration of the

conclusion we have reached in the fact that after the resurrection the unnamed disciple is closely associated with Peter in just the manner that John is represented to have been in the other gospels.

When we accept John as the author, to which conclusion all considerations conduct us; when we see how all events square themselves with the record, how difficulties vanish (barring those we shall deal with in another chapter), and how easy becomes the explanation of things otherwise inexplicable, the extreme probability of that conclusion becomes so apparent that we cannot but rest assured that the tradition which has

**The Conclusion**

**Fits the Case.**

obtained, through nineteen centuries, is the only solution of the Johannean problem. On the other hand, one fatal result of all negative criticism, concerning the fourth gospel, is that no author can be found who will fit the needs of the case. The marvelous coherence of

**No Author but  
John possible.**

the book, its perfect self-consistency, the powerful presentation of a phase of the Saviour's life—be that phase real or imaginary, the character of the miracles, the unexampled loftiness of the discourses, the submergence of the author in a subtle and unobtrusive indication of personality—all this would require a mind of the finest grain, a mentality of such commanding force, that we cannot conceive of the possibility of its being hidden even during the first half of the second century. Assume, however, that John wrote the book, that he was therefore reporting the utterances and doings of a mind vastly more subtle and comprehen-

sive than his own, difficulties vanish, mysteries are cleared up, the riddle finds its solution.

But there are one or two things more *within* the gospel which agree with external testimony. There are certain

**Who Wrote in His Old Age.** indications that it was written toward the close of John's life. Dr. Peabody

has referred to what he calls "the marks of senility," "the backsetting of an old man's memory," in the details which come out in the narrative portion of the gospel. Such is, for example, the note concerning the supper when John (we assume that his authorship is made probable) was about to ask Jesus the name of the traitor, he remembered (as though he had often dwelt on the recollection) the "*leaning back*, as he was, on Jesus' breast." Dr. Peabody has instanced the episode of the blind beggar. The picture is clearly drawn as though now recollected as it is told for the first time. There is the caution of the parents, the reference to the ability of the son to speak for himself; that confidence proved not to have been misplaced, as the one-time blind man, who, like a gamin, is no respecter of persons, at first answers the question soberly; then, as the repeated questioning takes on the form of a cross-examination, grows saucy, and at last lets his keen wit flash out to the discomfiture of his examiners, who take revenge for their defeat by excommunicating their conqueror. Details, which at the time of the action do not force themselves sensibly upon the consciousness, come out one by one under reflection, like the features of a landscape on the film under the developer. So the gospel teems with just the sort of minutiae which, while unessential to the treatment of the theme, yet prove

that the theme itself has been so long dwelt on, that even the minor accessory and attendant circumstances have become familiar and endeared features of the subject.

We have seen that the external testimony pointed to Ephesus as the place of composition. We cannot *definitely*

The Gospel not Written in Palestine nor to Jews.      *locate the author from internal testimony. But the gospel does show that he was not in Palestine, and that he was speaking to other than Jews. For instance, if he had been writing to the*

Jews he would not have explained the use which the six waterpots usually served, nor would he have used the phrase, “*after the Jew’s manner of purifying.*” Indeed we find indications of the Gentile character of the audience in the constant reiteration of the words, “*the Jews.*” So, too, a Jew would hardly have needed to be told that John baptized in *Ænon*, “*because there was much water there.*” Had he been writing to Jews we could not have imagined him writing, “*Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool,*” nor would he have said, “*After these things there was a feast of the Jews.*” Still less would it have been necessary to insert translations of Hebrew or Aramaic words, such as we have had occasion to mention in another connection. A hint that the apostle was removed from Palestine may possibly be seen in the almost uniform past tense in which locations are named, such as (xviii. 1, xix. 41) “*there was a garden.*”

**Summing up.** If our reading of the testimony is correct, therefore, we find a singular correspondence

between testimony from without and testimony from within the gospel as to the time and place of its

origin, and its author. In the case of the external testimony, there is a marked unanimity, an agreement which cannot be accounted for on grounds other than its truth.

While none the less does the testimony **Convergence of Testimony.** from within give the impression of being incidental, undesigned, the natural deposit of a mind surcharged with verity. Both lines of witness converge toward the same point of time and place, and point to one individual. The tradition is uniform with but a single break, which, nevertheless, can be accounted for. And in view of the fact mentioned above that adverse criticism substitutes no name in the place of John, nay, even is not agreed as to the nationality of the author, and, further, while calling it a "Tendency-writing," is not altogether a unit in defining that "tendency," we submit that the explanation which explains, the hypothesis (if it can be called such) which accounts for the phenomena, is the only one which on grounds purely scientific, apart from sentiment, should obtain.

## CHAPTER XI.

### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

**Objections.** Even though we have established what we set out to make probable (we did not propose to *demonstrate* the authorship of John), there are certain objections which will rise again and again and produce more or less disquiet. It may be well to consider these very briefly. One of the most weighty of them is that the character of the discourses in the fourth gospel differs so radically in substance and in style from that of the discourses in the synoptics that they could not have been spoken by the same person. The statement some objectors make is that if the Johannean discourses were real, there would be found stronger traces in the synoptic gospels. That a difference exists between the two sets of discourses is admitted on all sides, but the defenders of the genuineness of our gospel claim that this difference has been exaggerated. That there are strong points of connection pointing from Johannean to synoptic, and from synoptic to Johannean accounts, has come to be recognized. But all this being granted, a difference, and a great difference, still remains. How account for it?

A partial answer (though not entirely satisfactory) is

that the audience differed. The synoptic discourses were delivered mainly before Galilean and therefore theologically untrained audiences, and

**Audience Differed.** were on that account less mystic, more immediately practical, than the Johannean discourses delivered to principally Judean assemblages. The frequent interpolation in the Johannean discourses of objection and answer shows a *substantial* accuracy in the reports of the conversations, or else, a sense of dramatic vividness truly wonderful. We have also to note that when the geographical and historical accuracy has been proved, there is created a very strong presumption that the addresses are

**John's Receptivity Greater.** substantially historical. Then, too, in the Galilean discourses much that the other writers would pass over might catch John's ear because of his livelier spiritual receptivity. If our identification of him with the beloved disciple is correct, and remembering that he was probably a cousin of the Lord, a plausible supposition is that he talked over many things in private with the Master, and so gained a deeper insight into his mind. Doubtless, too, John

**He was an Editor as well.** exercised the function of an editor as well as a chronicler. The last verse of the book implies that the contents of the gospel were only

a selection. Doubtless John was in a position of comparative affluence. It is not unreasonable to conjecture that his education was superior to that of the majority of the disciples, and that therefore sayings of deeper import clung to his mind and are reproduced in his gospel.

Another suggestion which is entitled to respectful consideration is that the synoptists seem to have been bound

**Oral Tradition Limited Synoptics.** by an oral tradition which circumscribed their record. John was further removed from this tradition both in time and place, he therefore saw more and more clearly that the “letter killeth but the spirit giveth life,” and so his statement is a freer transcript than theirs. No less important for our purpose is it to recall that John was clearly supplementing the other gospels. For this we have the testimony of Clement of Alexandria, of Eusebius, and of Jerome. And even if no such tradition were extant, we should not, *à priori*, expect him to write a narrative on the same lines as those of THREE already existing gospels. If there were material existing outside of the synoptic tradition, we should look for him to use it. Bearing this in mind, perhaps the most complete answer is that John was answering an incipient gnosticism, which made the Logos an inferior being. He aimed to refute this form of error, and hence, in identifying the Logos with God, made his whole argument tend in that direction, choosing narrative and discourse with that end in view. With this object it was only natural that discourses of the Saviour which bore on this subject, and which, apart from this special bearing, had not been remembered, that isolated remarks which had for the time being sunk out of sight, should rise to the surface when the occasion recalled and the subject suggested them. And this suggestion finds confirmation in the indication that John’s mind was naturally of the bent to notice sayings, to store away discourses, of a philosophic character.

**Natural Bent of John’s Mind.**

The use of "Logos" in the Revelation prefigures its development later in life (assuming, of course, an early date and identity of authorship for the Apocalypse). It would naturally happen, then, that addresses and speeches and chance remarks which would have no lodgment in minds not metaphysically inclined would find a home and an abiding place in John's heart, thence to be recalled when time and occasion served.

Just one thing more seems necessary here, and that is to suggest that in the process of editing undoubtedly John exercised his prerogative of choosing the discourses or sayings, of giving prominence to the teachings of Christ, which bore most directly on the polemic purpose which he had in view. From this there may appear throughout the Gospel a tint which does not come prominently to the surface of the synoptic discourses, but which a careful examination will reveal to have been harmoniously blended throughout the texture.

Still a Subjective  
Element Must  
be Allowed.

But when all possible allowance has been made on the scores suggested above, there will still remain an impression of a subjective element above

that which these considerations require. We have also to take into account what Archdeacon Watkins (*Bampton Lectures*, p. 426) calls "*translation*, or, if this term has acquired too narrow a meaning, *transmutation*." This writer refers to a threefold "*translation*:" of language, from Aramaic into Greek; of time, from the first third of the century to its end—from youth to mature old age; and in place, from Palestine to Ephesus. Indeed, it is hardly conceivable that the discourses appear word for

word as Jesus delivered them, even after making due allowance for the receptivity of a memory cultivated after the manner of Eastern people. That we have in very many cases the very words of Jesus we cannot doubt. But that the discourses are *verbatim* reports is incredible. The

**What Element is  
Johannine and  
what Christic?**

question therefore comes, What can be allowed to John? Dr. Gloag has “no hesitation in allowing a certain degree of subjectivity on the part of

John. The thoughts . . . . were those of Jesus, but John clothed them in his own language,” perhaps adding at times his own reflections on them. Godet follows Watkins in allowing for translation in language, and adds modification on the score of compression and of the action of memory. But he denies the admission of anything not essentially and really Christic.

Doubtless a careful study of the Johannine discourses in comparison with those of the synoptic gospels, and of the indications of genuineness in the interpolation of question and answer, as well as notice of the pertinence to the incidents which are represented as giving rise to the dis-

**Substantial Histor-  
icity of Johannine  
Discourses.**

courses, will lead to the concession of *substantial* historicity to the Johannine discourses. Though the form be new, the thought is not

John’s but his Teacher’s.

As Dr. Sanday has put it (*Expositor*, April, 1892), “A mind like St. John’s was not a sheet of white paper, on which impressions once made remained as they were: it must needs impart to them some infusion of its own substance; and if there is something of masterfulness in the

process, who had a better right, or who was more likely to exercise this freedom, than the last surviving apostle, who had himself lain upon the bosom of the Lord?" Yet one suggestion more will be of weight to some: the Spirit's influence in recalling to John's mind what otherwise might have been forgotten.

**Two Further Objections.** The two most important objections now urged against the fourth gospel are, to quote Dr. Sanday (*Expositor*, January, 1892), (1) "That there is a deep-seated difference respecting the whole course of the ministry of Christ," and (2) "That the fourth gospel gives us a portrait of Christ which is all divinity." The first point is that while in Mark and the other synoptists Christ did not come forward with his claim to be the Messiah till somewhat late in his ministry, in the fourth gospel his claim to the Messiahship marks one of his first acts. The two pictures, it is claimed, are mutually exclusive. If the synoptic version is true, the Johannine is not, and therefore could not have been told by an apostle.

**Answer:** The answer to this is that even if the **A non sequitur.** premises are true, the conclusion does not follow. The phenomena presented in John, were they as asserted, can easily be accounted for on the hypothesis of what Dr. Sanday calls the "foreshortening" of memory, the difficulty of maintaining after the lapse of years an exact sense of the temporal consecution of events and their results or causes. There is a tendency to displace happenings and deductions from them, to write with anticipation of events because of the insight *ex post facto* into the consequences of those events.

There need be nothing essentially unhistorical in this, so that the conclusion that John did not write the gospel ascribed to him does not follow.

But it is possible to go back of this Premises not True. and show that the facts are not as represented. The statement of the opponents is, that while Christ in the synoptics appeared certain of his mission from the beginning, he only urged his Messiahship at a later period ; that the disciples are represented as acting in accordance with this course of events, Peter's confession marking the first breaking of the light upon the disciples' minds ; that even John the Baptist does not know Jesus as the Messiah, but from prison sends to ask whether Jesus were the Christ. Against this it is asserted that in John the cleansing of the temple implies a claim on the part of Jesus, and the recognition of that claim on the part of the people, to be the Messiah ; that from the first the disciples acknowledged him as such ; and that John the Baptist from the beginning declared to the world the Messiahship of Jesus. On this we have to remark that

**Ex post facto Reasoning.** it is difficult to detach one's self from the significance of things and names as we know them *at the present*. We are apt, for instance, to read into the word "Messiah" all that Paul and John and nineteen centuries have taught us is wrapped up in that word. But the Jews did not see in it what we do. Dr. Sanday calls attention to the fact that there were a score of Messiahs between the death of Herod and the Jewish war.

Hence it does not follow that when Andrew said, "We have found the Messiah," that he perceived in that title all

that John knew to be contained therein at the time that he wrote. Again, even in inspired persons it is necessary to make allowances for fluctuations in faith (remember Elijah!), hence there is nothing beyond reason in the Baptist's sending to know Jesus' claims to the Messiahship after John himself had proclaimed him. And in the Johannine representation of the Baptist's preaching, the additional feature, "Behold the Lamb of God," adds nothing essential to what he says in the synoptists. Likewise the Johannine gospel makes it evident that our Lord quite late in his ministry had not clearly revealed himself, at least to the understanding of the people, as the Christ, since (John x. 24) the people ask, "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." So that the Johannine gospel in reality presents Jesus as the Messiah with "as unequivocal signs of reserve" (Dr. Sanday) as do the synoptics. Indeed, to urge to its full the objection of a progressive development of this Messianic idea in the first three gospels requires us to drop out as unhistorical the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke, which contradict "the progressive and developing claims" of Jesus to be the Messiah. It is only by ignoring the "signs of reserve" in the fourth gospel and by emphasizing such notes as Andrew's remark to his brother, and by following the reverse operation in the synoptics, that we get a delusive contrariety which disappears when submitted to unbiased examination.

**Second Objection.  
Preëxistence of  
Christ.**

The other principal objection of which we have made mention deals with the prominence given in the fourth gospel to the preëxistence of Christ as the Logos and his consequent divinity for which, it is asserted,

there is almost nothing in the other three. But in the synoptics Christ forgives sins, which the Jews acknowledge is an attribute of God alone; his second coming as judge is no less clearly taught; he “there legislates for his Church, there claims the devotion of his disciples; . . . . there too the Son is also Lord, there too he promises to dwell like the Shekinah among his people . . . .” (Dr. Sanday). The idea is by no means so prominent in the synoptics, for it was an immediate consequence of the Logos doctrine in John, and to develop it was a part of the polemic plan of his book. But as a ground idea, it is sufficiently clear in the first three gospels to those “that have eyes to see.” The synoptists presuppose the Lord’s divinity.

The preceding are the principal objections which are now urged against the John gospel. If they are answered, but little further can be laid against its historicity or genuineness.

Some minor alleged inconsistencies or omissions may be mentioned here. For instance, that the scene of the activity of Jesus and the events described differ in the two accounts. To which it is a sufficient answer to refer to the supplementary character of John’s gospel, to remember that both the synoptic accounts and the Johannine are but selections, and that the synoptic accounts admit of being dove-tailed with the Johannine, while the Johannine representation *assumes* certain events definitely described by the synoptists. Thus while John gives no account of the baptism, he yet says, “I saw the Spirit descend like a dove,” etc., which evidently presupposes the baptism. If

an argument is raised against the historic verity of the gospel because the account of the raising of Lazarus is not given by the other three evangelists, what must be said of the story of the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, which is told only by Luke?

The argument from the apparent difference of one day in placing our Lord's eating of the Passover and suffering death is now no longer pressed, as the arguments on both sides are quite evenly balanced. The same may be said regarding the difference in reckoning the hours of the day of our Lord's crucifixion.

We have then as the result of our studies the establishment of the all but universal tradition of the Church that the apostle John was the author of the last of our gospels. That this will be immediately and universally accepted is too much to expect. But that the flank of the negative position has been turned is too evident to need even statement. From date to date the critics have been forced back only to take new positions, until about all that they have contended for has been proved impossible. That we shall soon have a practical consensus seems most probable. The new finds in apostolic literature strengthen the defenders and bring no new material to the assailants. The inevitable result of a reinforcement of one side only is the ultimate victory of that side. We believe that victory is not far distant. Meanwhile "the fourth gospel continues and will continue to shine, like the sun in heaven, its own best evidence, and will shine all the brighter when the clouds, great and small, shall have passed away" (Schaff, *Hist. Chr. Church*, i, 724).

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## INDEX.

---

### A.

- Abbot, Ezra, 39, 40, 41, 54, 55, 60  
Adverse criticism of Fourth Gospel, 14  
Alogi, 10, 57, 58, 63  
    not a party, 10  
    not impartial, 11  
Anicetus, 65  
Antiquity of Fourth Gospel, 18  
Apollonius, 63  
Apologies of Justin, 36–44  
Apostleship of evangelist, 90  
Appendix to Gospel, 58–60  
Arabic versions of Tatian's Harmony, 31, 32  
Argument from silence, 12  
Arnold, Matthew, 53, 54  
Athenagoras of Athens, 29  
Attack on Gospel, lines of, 15, 16  
Audiences of the discourses, 99  
Authenticity of Gospel, 15

### B.

- Basilides, 53, 54  
Basis of adverse criticism, 15, 16  
Baur, 14, 15, 17, 19, 82

- Bretschneider, 14  
 Brusqueness of Sadducees, 79

## C.

- Caiaphas, 93  
 Canon of gospels, when closed, 19  
 Caspari, 36  
 Cerinthus, 58, 63, 70, 76  
 Character sketches, 86, 87  
 Characteristics of author, 94  
 Chronicon Paschale, 28  
 Chronological exactness of Gospel, 80  
 Ciasca, 31  
 Claudius Apollinaris, 28  
 Cleansing of temple, 104  
 Clement of Alexandria, 19, 20, 41, 64, 100  
 Clementine Homilies, 23, 24  
 Conjecture, relation of, to tradition, 11  
 Convergence of testimony, 96, 97  
 Critical problems, 9  
 Criticism of Fourth Gospel, modern, 14  
 Cross, Mr., 83  
 Curetonian Syriac, 33  
 Customs, Jewish, 85

## D

- Date of Clementines, 24  
 Petrine Gospel, 46  
 Dates assigned to Fourth Gospel, 15, 17, 69  
 Death of Christ, date of, 16  
 Defense of Gospel, lines of, 17  
 Deists and the Gospel, 14  
 Detail in Gospel, 88  
 Dialogue with Trypho, 37, 39  
 Diatessaron of Tatian, 31, 32  
 Differences among the Gospels, 16, 98

- Disagreement of critics, 12
- Disciples, inner circle of, 92
- Discourses of Jesus, 16, 98, 99, 101
- Discovery of Diatessaron, 31
- Divinity of Jesus, 103
- Docetism, 45, 60
- Dogmatic prepossessions, 10
- Dramatic vividness, 99
- Dressel, 23
- Drummond, James, 54

## E.

- Easter, date of, 26
- Emanations, gnostic, not in Gospel, 69
- Ephesus, residence of John in, 62, 63, 64, 69, 70, 96
- Ephraem the Syrian, 31
- Epilogue of Gospel, 91, 99
- Epiphanius, cited, 10, 53, 57, 58
- Episcopate not debated by Gospel, 69
- Epistle of Vienne and Lyons, 29
- Eusebius, 20, 26, 45, 63, 64, 65, 100
- Evangelical instrument, 52, 53
- Eyewitness wrote Gospel, 86

## F.

- Fathers' use of Gospel, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 39, 40, 51, 52, 54, 63, 64, 66
- Forgery unlikely, 44, 55, 60, 62, 80, 81
- Foreshortening of memory, 103
- Four gospels of Irenæus, 19
- Fourteenth Nisan, 27
- Fourth Gospel and synoptics 16

## G.

- Gentile character of audience, 96
- Geography of Gospel, 82, 83, 88

- Gloag, 36, 102
- Gnosticism, 48 ft., 60, 62, 69, 70, 100
- Godet, 93, 102
- Gospel criticism, 1
- Gospel of Peter, 45, 46, 47
- Graphic writing, 86
- Greek language *vs.* Hebrew, 73

## II.

- Harman, 32
- Harmony of Tatian, 31, 32
- Harnack, 30, 32, 36
- Hebrew movement of Gospel, 73
  - use of, in Gospel, 75
- Heinrici, G., 53
- Heracleon, 50, 51, 67
- Herod's temple, 80
- Hippolytus, 48, 52, 53, 54, 58
- Historical accuracy of Gospel, 80
- Historicity of Gospel, 15
- Hoyt, 36

## I.

- Ignatius, 65
- " Illuminationists," 14
- Inexact quotations by the Fathers, 21, 41
- Irenaeus, 18, 19, 39, 48, 49, 51, 57, 63, 64, 66, 67, 70
- Iscariot, 75

## J.

- James one of inner circle, 92
- Jerome, 66, 100
- Jesus, date of death of, 16
  - discourses of, 16, 98, 99, 101
  - scene of activity of, 16
  - understood by author, 91

- Jewish origin of Gospel, 73
  - sects known to evangelist, 78
- Jews and Samaritans, 79
- Johannean problem proper, 9
- Johannean problem, the wider, 9
- John, Apostle, belongs to inner circle, 92
  - date of death of, 66
  - only possible author, 91, 94
  - residence of in Ephesus, 62, 63, 64, 69, 70, 96
  - unnamed in Gospel, 92
  - wrote in old age, 95
- John Baptist, in the Gospel, 93
- Josephus, 79, 80, 81
- Judas, designation of as traitor, 92
- Judases, the two, 93
- Justin Martyr, 30, 36-44, 64, 67, 84, 85
- Justin's gospels ours, 38, 39

## K.

Keim, 15, 17

## L.

- Lagarde, 23
- Lazarus, raising of, 78, 107
- Legends concerning John, 59, 63, 65, 70
- Liddon, Canon, 33
- Lightfoot, Bishop, 69, 74, 78, 79, 80, 87
- Literary style of Gospel, 71
- Logos identified with God, 100
  - incarnated, 29, 30, 40, 105, 106
- Lord's Supper, institution of, 91
- Luthardt, 35
- Lyons and Vienne, epistle of, 29

## M.

- McGiffert on Gospel of Peter, 48  
Manna, giving of, 77  
Marcion, 49, 50, 52  
Martha and Mary, 87, 89  
Martineau, 46  
Martyrdom of James, 92  
Mary Magdalene, 88  
Matthias, 53  
Melito of Sardis, 28  
“Memoirs of the Apostles,” 37, 38, 39  
Messianic idea among Jews, 104, 105  
    in Gospel, 76, 77, 103, 104  
Montanists, 60  
Muratorian fragment, 33, 34, 67

## N.

- Names explained, 74  
Negative criticism destructive, 94  
    evidence, value of, 12  
Nicodemus, 87  
Nicolaitans, 70  
Numbers, use of, in Gospel, 88

## O.

- Old Latin version, 33  
Old Syriac version, 33  
Old Testament known to evangelist, 84  
Omission to mention heresies, 69  
Ophites, 56  
Oral tradition, 99, 100  
Origen, 51  
Origin of Logos doctrine, 42

## P.

- Palestinian origin of Gospel, 75, 96  
 topography, 82  
 Papias, 61  
 Particles, paucity of, in Gospel, 74  
 Paschal controversy, 26, 27, 69  
 Peabody, 95, 96  
 Peratae, 56  
 Peter, at the supper, 92  
 belongs to inner circle, 92  
 Gospel of, 45, 46, 47  
 Petrine apocrypha, 45  
 Pharisees and Sadducees, 78  
 Philo, 42, 84, 85  
 Philosophy natural to author, 100  
 Polycarp, 48, 49, 61, 63, 64, 65  
 Polycrates of Ephesus, 26, 27, 63  
 Preëxistence of Christ, 105  
 Priests and Sadducees, 78, 79  
 Principles of criticism, 22  
 Problems of New Testament, 9  
 Prophet, the, of John, 78  
 Ptolemæus, 50, 51, 68

## Q.

- Quotations of Fathers, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 39, 40,  
 51, 52, 54, 63, 64, 66  
 inexact, 21

## R.

- Reception of the Gospel 180 A.D., 25  
 Receptivity of the author, 99  
 Robinson's researches, 82

## S.

- Sadducees, 78  
 Samaritans and Jews, 79  
 Sanday, Dr., 83, 84, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106  
 Scarcity of extant second-century literature, 12  
 Schaff, 26, 107  
 Schleiermacher, 14  
 Schürer, 82  
 Sects of Jews, known to evangelist, 78  
 Serapion of Antioch, 45, 46, 48  
 Simon, son of Joannes, 75  
 Spontaneity of detail, 89  
 Subjective element in the Gospel, 101  
 Suidas, 66  
 Supplementary character of Gospel, 100, 106  
 Synoptic gospels, 16, 43, 92, 93, 98, 102, 103, 104, 106  
     problem, 9  
 Syriac version, 33

## T.

- Tatian, 30-32  
 Tayler, J. J., 15  
 Temple, cleansing of, 104  
 "Tendency" in Fourth Gospel, 15  
 Tertullian, 43, 49, 50, 51  
 Testimony for Gospel deficient, 16, 17  
     convergence of, 96, 97  
 Theophilus of Antioch, 20, 21, 22, 67  
 Thoma, A., 42, 84  
 Thomas Didymus, 93  
 Time-marks in the Gospel, 16, 87  
 Tischendorf, 19  
 Topography of gospels, 82, 88  
 Tradition, force of, 11  
     nearly continuous, 10, 94, 107

Tübingen school, 14, 23

Type of teaching of Gospel, 71

V.

Valentinians, 51, 52, 53, 67

Valentinus, 50, 51, 52, 53

Variation in quotations, 21, 41

Versions, testimony of, to Gospel, 33

Vienne and Lyons, epistle of, 29

W.

Watkins, 101, 102

Westcott, Bishop, 33, 40, 91, 93

Z.

Zahn, 30, 31

Zebedee, sons of, 92, 93

Zeller on the Clementines, 23, 24







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